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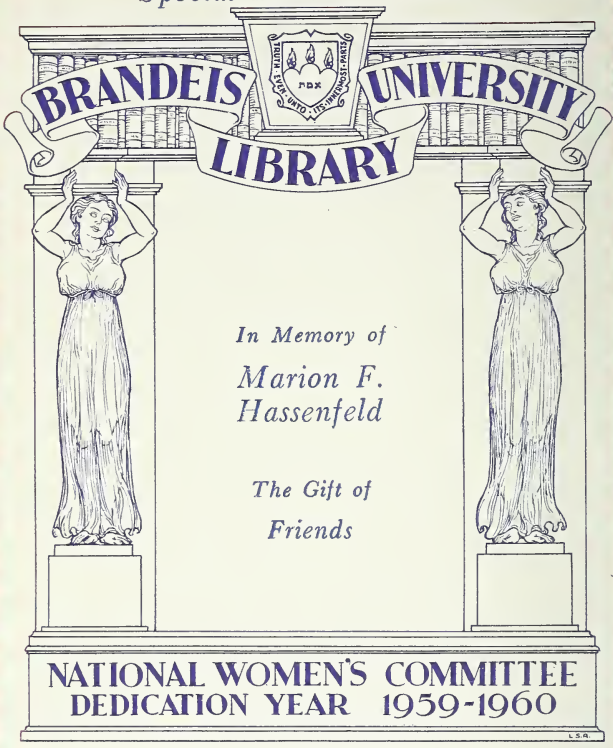

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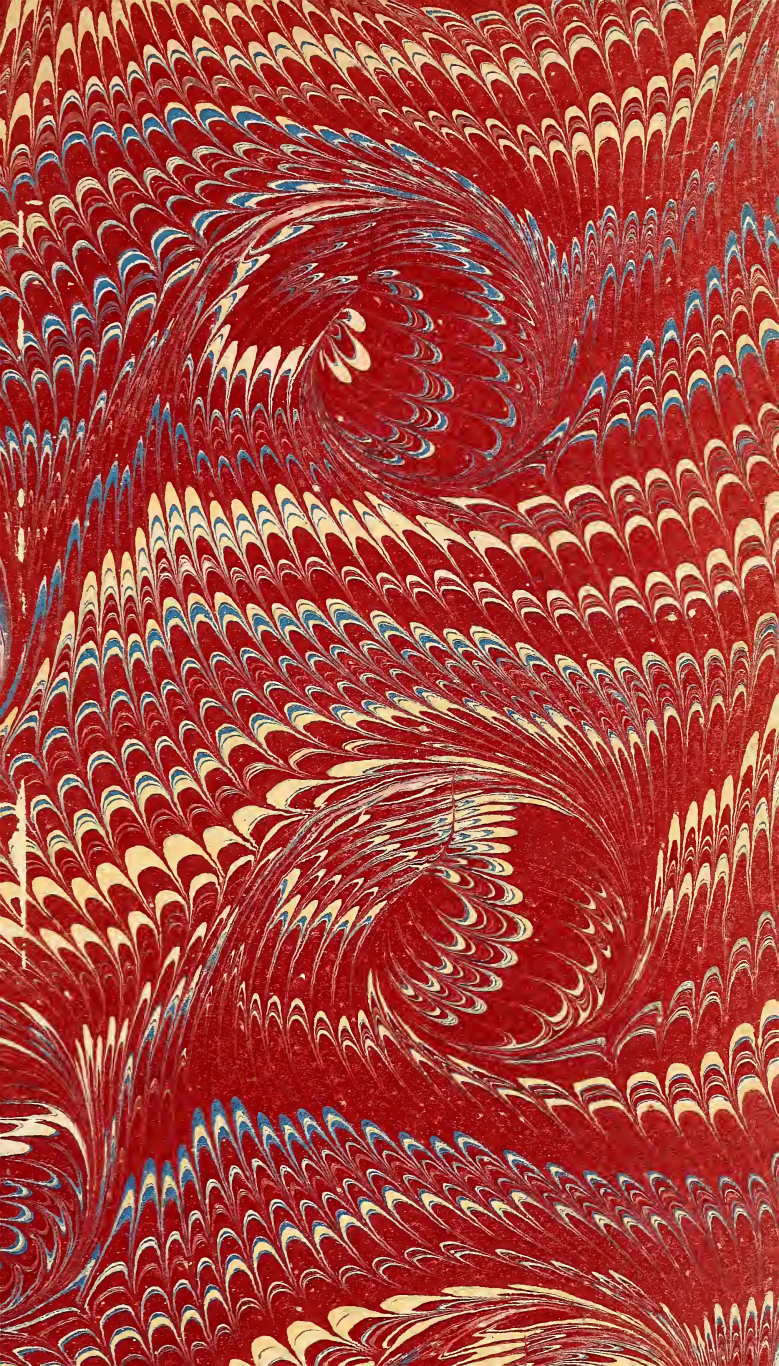

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MEMOIRS

OF

JOSEPH GRIMALDI.

VOL. II.

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OF

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CHAPTER XIII.

1807.

The mystery is cleared up, chiefly through the instrumentality of Mr. Alderman Harmer; and the characters of the six Ladies and the six Gentlemen are satisfactorily explained. The Trial of Mackintosh for burglary.—Its result.

About three weeks had elapsed since the last dinner in Throgmorton Street, during the whole of which time nothing had been seen or heard either of the six ladies or of the six gentlemen, when, as Grimaldi was sitting reading in his parlour, a strange gentleman was shown into the room. As he was accustomed to be waited upon by many people of whom he knew nothing, he requested the gen-

tleman to take a chair, and after a few commonplace remarks upon the weather and the papers, begged to ask his business with him.

"Why, my business with you, Mr. Grimaldi," said the stranger, putting down his hat as if he had come to stop a long time, "is of a very peculiar nature. Perhaps I had better commence by telling you who I am. My name is Harmer."

"Harmer?" said Grimaldi, running over in his mind all the theatrical names he had ever heard.

"Mr. James Harmer of Hatton Garden. The reason of my waiting upon you is this,—I wish to speak to you upon a very disagreeable affair."

There was a peculiar solemnity in the visitor's manner, although it was very gentlemanly and quiet, which at once threw Grimaldi into a state of great nervous excitement. He entreated him, with a very disturbed countenance, to be kind enough to explain the nature of the communication he had to make, as explicitly as he could.

"To come, then, at once to the point," said Mr. Harmer,—"Do you not know a person of the name of Mackintosh?"

"Yes, certainly," replied Grimaldi, his thoughts

flying off at a tangent first to Throgmorton Street, and then to the ladies and gentlemen in Charlotte Street;—"oh yes, I know him."

"He is now," said Mr. Harmer solemnly, "in great danger of losing his life."

Grimaldi at once supposed his visitor was a doctor,—said he was very sorry to hear it, asked how long he had been ill, and begged to know what was the matter with him.

"His bodily health is good enough," replied Mr. Harmer with a half-smile. "In the course of my professional career, Mr. Grimaldi, I have known many men in imminent danger of losing their lives who have been in most robust health."

Grimaldi bowed his head, and presumed his visitor referred to cases in which the patient had gone off suddenly. Mr. Harmer said that he certainly did, and that he had strong reason to fear Mr. Mackintosh would go off one morning very suddenly indeed.

"I greatly regret to hear it," said the other. "But pray tell me his condition without reserve: you may safely be communicative to me. What is the nature of the disorder? what is it called?"

"Burglary," answered Mr. Harmer quaintly.

"Burglary!" exclaimed Grimaldi, trembling from head to foot.

"Nothing less," replied Mr. Harmer. "The state of the case, Mr. Grimaldi, is simply this: Mackintosh is accused of having committed a burglary at Congleton in Cheshire. I am a solicitor, and am engaged on his behalf; the evidence against him is very strong, and if he be found guilty, which I must say appears to me extremely likely, he will most infallibly be hanged."

This intelligence so amazed Grimaldi, that he fell into a chair as if he had been shot, and it was some little time before he was sufficiently recovered to resume the conversation. The moment he could do so, he hastened to explain that he had never supposed Mackintosh to be other than an honest man, or he would carefully have shunned all acquaintance with him.

"He has been anything but an honest man for a long time past," said Mr. Harmer: "still, I may say that he is anxious to reform; and, at all events, I am certain that this particular robbery was not committed by him."

"Good God! and he still likely to be hung for it!"

"Certain," said Mr. Harmer; "unless we can prove an *alibi*. There is only one man who has it in his power to do so; and that man, Mr. Grimaldi, is yourself."

"Then," said Grimaldi, "you may command me."

In a lengthened and, to him, very interesting conversation which ensued, he learned that the robbery had been committed on the 13th of March, on the very night on which he had played for Lund's benefit at Woolwich, and afterwards supped with Mackintosh and his friends. This accidental circumstance was of course of the last importance to Mr. Harmer's client, and that gentleman receiving a promise from Grimaldi that he would make an affidavit of the fact if required, wished him a good morning and left him.

Mackintosh being admitted to bail a few days afterwards, called upon Grimaldi to express his gratitude for the readiness with which he had consented to give his important evidence. The insight into the man's character which Mr. Harmer had given him, rendered him of course desirous to be as little in his company as possible; but as his kind nature would not allow him to wound

his feelings more than was absolutely necessary in this interview (quite voluntary on his part), immediately after the exposure, and as he was moreover very desirous to put a few questions to him concerning the twelve ladies and gentlemen, he dissembled his dislike, and placed some refreshment before him, of which he partook. He then said,

"Mr. Mackintosh, I cannot suppose you to be guilty of any act of this kind, for you have so many circumstances in your favour. Putting myself out of the question,—I am merely an actor working for my subsistence, — you can call, to prove your *alibi*, gentlemen of station and undoubted respectability. Mr. Farmer and his friends, for instance, could not fail to have great weight with the Court."

A very perceptible change overspread the countenance of Mr. Mackintosh when he heard these words. He shook his head with great vehemence, and looked strongly disposed to laugh. Grimaldi, who was one of the simplest creatures in all worldly matters that ever breathed, paused for a reply, but finding his acquaintance said nothing, added,

"Besides, — the ladies. Dear me, Mr. Mackintosh, the appearance of those gentlemen's wives would be almost enough to acquit you at once."

"Mr. Grimaldi," said Mackintosh, with a slight tremor in his voice which, despite his serious situation, arose from an incipient tendency to laughter, — "Mr. Grimaldi, none of those women are married."

Grimaldi stared incredulously.

"Not one," said Mackintosh: "they only pass for married people—they are not really so."

"Then, how," said Grimaldi, waxing very angry, "how dared you to invite my wife among them, and induce me to take her there!"

"I'm very sorry, sir," said the man humbly.

"I'll tell you what, sir," interposed the other, I'll be put off no longer: this is not the time for secrecy and falsehood, nor is it your interest to tell me anything but the truth. Now, I demand to know at once the real characters of these people, and why you shook your head when I mentioned your bringing them forward as witnesses."

"Mr. Grimaldi," replied the man with great

apparent humility, " they would not come if they were sent for; and besides, if they did, it would injure, not assist me, for they are all marked men."

" Marked men!" exclaimed Grimaldi.

" Too true, sir," said Mackintosh; " desperate characters every one."

" What! Farmer?"

" He was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey, and got a reprieve while standing on the drop beneath the gallows."

" And Williams?"

" Williams is a forger of notes."

" And Jesson?"

" He and Barber are both burglars."

" And the Jewish-looking man,—I forget the rascal's name,—the man who sings Kelly's songs; what is he?"

" Oh, he helps to pass the forged notes, and has been three times in the pillory."

" There is one other man whom I have not named—that fellow Jones; what is he? a murderer?"

" No, sir, only a burglar," answered Mackin-

tosh. "Don't you recollect, Mr. Grimaldi, that he would not join the party to Woolwich?"

"Perfectly well."

"Well, sir, the truth is, he left town for Cheshire the same day the party was proposed, and he is the man who actually committed the deed I am charged with. He did the robbery. I found it out only to-day; but, though I know it, I can't prove it now:—and all those people in Charlotte Street are doing their best to get me found guilty, and save the real man, who is better liked among them than I am."

The enumeration of all these crimes, the reflection of having been intimately associated with such wretches, and the fear of having his innocence confounded with their guilt, quite overwhelmed their unfortunate victim. He was thoroughly stupified for some minutes, and then, starting up with uncontrollable fury, seized the man by the throat, and demanded how he durst take him among such a horde of villains, under pretence of being his friend. Mackintosh, alarmed at this unexpected ebullition of resentment, fell on his knees before him in the most abject man-

ner, and poured forth many entreaties for mercy, and protestations of regret.

"Answer me one question," said Grimaldi, releasing his hold: "give me a plain and straightforward answer, for it 's only by telling me the truth now that you can hope for any leniency at my hands. What was your motive for taking me into the company of these men and women, and why did they want to have me among them?"

"I 'll tell you the truth, by God!" replied Mackintosh, "and without the smallest attempt at disguise. They thought you must be very good company, and hearing me say that I knew you, gave me no rest until I consented to take you to the house in Charlotte Street; which I at last agreed to do, stipulating, upon my soul, that no harm should ever be done you, and that their real characters should be carefully concealed. You turned out as they expected; they were very much delighted with your songs and stories, and I was obliged to promise to bring you again. And that 's the truth."

Although this explanation relieved him from some very terrible fears relative to the motives of these persons in seeking his companionship, it

was a very galling reflection to have been playing the jester to a gang of robbers and vagabonds; and as it presented itself to his mind, it drove him almost mad with rage. Never accustomed to give way to his passions, the fit of fury into which he had worked himself was such, that it was many hours before he recovered from its effects. Mr. Mackintosh, with much wisdom, took himself off the moment his confession was concluded.

About a week after this agreeable visit, Grimaldi was sitting at breakfast one morning, when his servant announced a lady, and in walked—as he sat paralysed with surprise—no less a person than Mrs. Farmer, who, sitting down with great composure and freedom, said, when the servant had left the room,

"Well, Grim, here 's Jack Mackintosh has got himself into a pretty hobble, hasn't he?"

"He has indeed," said Grim, all abroad with amazement, "and I am very sorry for it."

"Lord! you don't mean that!" returned the lady: "I 'm sure it 's more than I am. Of course, it 's everybody's turn one time; and Jack 's had a very long string."

It being now thoroughly evident that the party, deeming longer concealment hopeless, wished to treat Grimaldi as one of themselves, and to imply that he had been acquainted with their real characters all along, he resolved to act decidedly; so, the moment the lady had finished speaking, said,

"By some extraordinary mistake and blindness I have been led into the society of yourself and your associates, ma'am. I regret this bitterly for many reasons, but for two especially: first, that I should ever have had acquaintance with such characters; and secondly, that it compels me to act with apparent harshness to a woman. As I have no other course to pursue, however, I beg you will have the goodness to tell the ladies and gentlemen whom I have had the unhappiness to meet in Charlotte Street, that I request them never to show their faces here; and that I wish never to see, and certainly shall never speak to any of them again."

The servant entering the room at this point in reply to the summons he had previously given, he continued,

"As soon as this person has rested herself after her walk, show her to the door; and take

care that you never admit her, or any of the people who have been in the habit of coming here with her, into the house again." With these words he quitted the room, as did the "lady" immediately afterwards; and well pleased he was to be rid of her society.

Sadlers Wells opened the season of 1807 with a new piece, called the "Ogre," in which he enacted a character dignified by the name of "Scamperino." This drama was not very successful, lingering only through ten nights; but as he was wanted of course in something else, and had every night to hurry to Covent Garden afterwards, to play the Clown in Mother Goose which was still running with unabated spirit, he endured very great fatigue for more than three months, during which the two theatres were open together.

In the July of this year, a very extraordinary circumstance occurred at Sadlers Wells, which was the great topic of conversation in the neighbourhood for some time afterwards. It happened thus:—

Captain George Harris of the Royal Navy (who was related to the Mr. Harris of Covent Gar-

den, and with whom Grimaldi was slightly acquainted,) had recently returned to England after a long voyage. The crew being paid off, many of the men followed their commander up to London, and proceeded to enjoy themselves after the usual fashion of sailors. Sadlers Wells was at that time a famous place of resort with the blue-jackets: the gallery being sometimes almost solely occupied by seamen and their female companions. A large body of Captain Harris's men resorted hither one night, and amongst them a man who was deaf and dumb, and had been so for many years. This man was placed by his shipmates in the front row of the gallery. Grimaldi was in great force that night, and, although the audience were in one roar of laughter, nobody appeared to enjoy his fun and humour more than this poor fellow. His companions, good-naturedly, took a good deal of notice of him, and one of them, who talked very well with his fingers, inquired how he liked the entertainments; to which the deaf-and-dumb man replied, through the same medium, and with various gestures of great delight, that he had never seen anything half so comical before.

As the scene progressed, Grimaldi's tricks and jokes became still more irresistible; and at length, after a violent peal of laughter and applause which quite shook the theatre, and in which the dumb man joined most heartily, he suddenly turned to his mate who sat next him, and cried out with much glee, "What a d—d funny fellow!"

"Why, Jack," shouted the other man, starting back with great surprise, "can you speak?"

"Speak!" returned the other; "ay, that I can, and hear too."

Upon this, the whole party of course gave three vehement cheers, and at the conclusion of the piece adjourned in a great procession to the "Sir Hugh Middleton," hard by, with the recovered man elevated on the shoulders of half a dozen friends in the centre. A crowd of people quickly assembled round the door, and great excitement and curiosity were occasioned as the intelligence ran from mouth to mouth, that a deaf-and-dumb man had come to speak and hear, all owing to the cleverness of Joey Grimaldi.

The landlady of the tavern, thinking Grimaldi would like to see his patient, told the man, that if he would call next morning, he should see the

actor who had made him laugh so much. Grimaldi being apprised of the circumstance, repaired to the house at the appointed time, and saw him, accompanied by several of his companions, all of whom still continued to manifest the liveliest interest in the sudden change that had happened to their friend, and kept on cheering and drinking and treating everybody in the house in proof of their gratification. The man, who appeared an intelligent, well-behaved fellow, said that in the earlier part of his life he could both speak and hear very well, and that he had attributed his deprivation of the two senses to the intense heat of the sun in the quarter of the world to which he had been, and from which he had very recently returned. He added, that on the previous evening he had for a long time felt a powerful anxiety to express his delight at what was passing on the stage, and that after some feat of Grimaldi's, which struck him as being particularly amusing, he had made a strong effort to deliver his thoughts, in which, to his own great astonishment no less than that of his comrades, he succeeded. Mr. Charles Dibdin, who was present, put several questions to the man, and

from his answers it appeared to every one present that he was speaking the truth. Indeed, his story was in some measure confirmed by Captain Harris himself; for one evening about six months afterwards, as Grimaldi was narrating the circumstance in the green-room at Covent Garden, that gentleman, who chanced to be present, immediately remarked that he had no reason from the man's behaviour while with him to suppose him an impostor, and that he had seen him on that day in the full possession of all his senses.

In the month of August following this circumstance, Grimaldi received a subpœna to attend the trial of Mackintosh at Stafford. He immediately gave notice to the manager of Sadlers Wells that he was compelled to absent himself for a few days, and Bradbury of the Circus was engaged to supply his place. Mr. Harmer and himself went down together; and on the day following their arrival, a true bill having been found against Mackintosh by the grand jury, the trial came on.

Grimaldi forgets the name of the prosecutor's counsel, and regrets the circumstance very much, observing, that the lengthened notice which he

bestowed upon him ought to have impressed his name on his memory. If this notice were flattering on account of its length, it certainly was not so in any other respect, inasmuch as the gentleman in question, in the exercise of that license which many practitioners unaccustomed to briefs assume, was pleased to designate the principal witness for the prisoner,—to wit, Mr. Joseph Grimaldi,—as a common player, a mountebank stroller, a man reared in and ever accustomed to vice in its most repulsive and degrading forms, a man who was necessarily a systematic liar, and, in fine, a man upon whose word or oath no thinking person could place any reliance.

During this exordium, and pending the logical deductions of the ingenious gentleman, whose name is unhappily lost to his country, the prisoner eyed his witness with intense anxiety, fearing, no doubt, that in his examination, either by angry words, or by attempting to retort on the counsel, or by volunteering jokes, or by seeking revenge upon himself, against whom he had such just ground of complaint, he might pass the rope round his neck instead of serving his cause. But his fears were needless. His witness had gone there to discharge what he considered a

solemn duty, and, apart from all personal considerations, to give his honest testimony in a case involving a man's life and death. He went there of course prepared to give his evidence in the manner best befitting himself and the occasion; and if he wanted any additional incentive to caution and coolness, he would have found it in the taunts of the opposing counsel, which naturally made him desirous to show by his behaviour, that the same man who could play the Clown upon a public stage, could conduct himself with perfect propriety as a private individual; in the same way as many young gentlemen who are offensive in wigs, become harmless and obscure in social life.

No fewer than nine witnesses were examined for the prosecution, all of whom, to Grimaldi's astonishment and horror, swore positively to the identity of the prisoner. The case for the prosecution being closed, he was immediately put into the box, for the defence; when, after stating that the prisoner was in his company at Woolwich at the time of the commission of the burglary, he proceeded to detail as briefly as he could all that had happened on the day and night in question. He carefully suppressed any extraneous matter

that related to himself or his own feelings which might have been injurious to the prisoner, and produced the play-bill of the night, to prove that there could be no mistake respecting the date. He was then submitted to a very long and vexatious cross-examination, but he never lost his temper for an instant, or faltered in his testimony in any way; and at its conclusion he was well rewarded for his good feeling and impartiality, by the highly flattering terms in which the presiding judge was pleased to express his opinion of the manner in which he had conducted himself.*

* The gentleman who first revised Grimaldi's reminiscences adds the following note in this stage of the Memoirs: "That Mr. Grimaldi has not unworthily commended his own conduct in this instance, no one who has heard him speak in public will be disposed to believe. His manner was always that of a man who, while he entertained a just respect for himself, properly respected the parties to whom he addressed himself. This was strikingly exemplified whenever, in consequence of the sudden illness of a performer, or some other stage-mishap, an apology became necessary; on which occasions he would step forward, and, announcing the calamity, claim the kindness of the audience with so much gentlemanly ease, and such an entire absence of all buffoonery or grimace, that, in spite of his grotesque dress and appearance, and the associations which they necessarily awakened, the audience forgot the Clown, and only remembered the gentleman.

His wife was the next witness called, and she fully corroborated his evidence. Two more witnesses were examined on the same side, when the judge interposed, putting it to the jury whether they really deemed it necessary to hear any further evidence, and not hesitating to say that the full conviction on his own mind was, that the witnesses for the prosecution were mistaken, and that the prisoner at the bar was innocent of the offence laid to his charge. The jury fully coincided in the learned judge's opinion, and immediately returned a verdict of "Not guilty," after a trial which had already lasted for upwards of nine hours.

Previous to his return to town, on the following morning, Grimaldi sought and obtained a few minutes' private conversation with Mackintosh. In this interview, he used his utmost endeavours to awaken his mind to a sense of his situation, to induce him to reflect on the crimes he had committed, and to place before him the inevitable consequences of his career if he held the same course; by all of which remonstrances the man appeared much affected, and for which he expressed himself very grateful. It was

scarcely necessary for Grimaldi to add, that any communication between them must be discontinued for the future; but, lest his true repentance might be endangered by the loss of the only friend he seemed to have, he gave him permission to write to him if he ever needed his assistance, and assured him that if it were in his power to relieve him, the appeal should never be made in vain. It says something for the honour of human nature and the sincerity of the man's repentance, that he never took undue advantage of this permission, and, indeed, was never heard of by Grimaldi again.

The witness returned to town, as he had every reason to do, with a light heart; and as he never heard any further intelligence either of the half-dozen gentlemen or the six Lucretias to whom he had so unwittingly introduced his wife, he experienced no further trouble or disquiet on this score.

CHAPTER XIV.

1807 to 1808.

Bradbury, the Clown.—His voluntary confinement in a Mad-house, to screen an "Honourable" Thief.—His release, strange conduct, subsequent career, and death.—Dreadful Accident at Sadlers Wells.—The Night-drives to Finchley.—Trip to Birmingham.—Mr. Macready, the Manager, and his curious Stage-properties.—Sudden recall to Town.

On his return to town, of course, he went immediately to Sadlers Wells; where, however, to his great surprise, he was informed by Mr. Dibdin that he was not wanted just yet, inasmuch as Bradbury had been engaged for a fortnight, and had not been there above half the time. He added, too, that Bradbury had made a great hit, and become very popular.

This intelligence vexed Grimaldi not a little, as he naturally feared that the sudden popularity of the new favourite might affect that of the old one; but his annoyance was much increased when he was informed that the proprietors were

anxious that on the night of Bradbury's benefit they should both play in the same pantomime. He yielded his consent with a very ill grace, and with the conviction that it would end in his entire loss of favour with the audience. When the proposition was made to Bradbury in his presence, it was easy to see that he liked it as little as himself; which was natural enough. It was not for him, however, to oppose the suggestion, as the combination of strength would very likely draw a great house, and he had only taken half of it with the proprietors for that night.

It was accordingly arranged that they should appear together on the following Saturday; Bradbury sustaining the part of the Clown for the first three scenes in the pantomime, then Grimaldi taking it for the next three scenes, and Bradbury coming in again to close the piece. Grimaldi was so much dissatisfied with these arrangements, that, on the morning of the day fixed, he told his friend Richard Lawrence (now or lately the Surrey treasurer) that he was certain it was "all up with him," and that Bradbury had thrown him completely out of favour with the public.

The result, however, was not what he anticipated. The moment he appeared, he was received with the most tremendous applause. Animated by this encouraging reception, he redoubled his exertions, and went through his three scenes amidst the loudest and most enthusiastic plaudits. This reception rather vexed and confused the other who had to follow, and who, striving to outdo his predecessor, made such a complete failure, that, although it was his own benefit, and he might reasonably be supposed to have a good many friends in the house, he was actually hissed, and ran off the stage in great disorder. Grimaldi finished the pantomime for him, and the brilliant manner in which it went off sufficiently testified to him that all the fears and doubts to which he had previously given way were utterly groundless. Indeed, when the performances were over, Bradbury frankly admitted that he was the best Clown he had ever seen, and that if he had been aware of his abilities, he would not have suffered himself to be put in competition with him on any account whatever.

This Bradbury was a clever actor in his way, and a very good Clown, but of so different a cha-

racter from Grimaldi, that it was hardly fair to either, to attempt instituting a comparison between them. He was a tumbling Clown rather than a humorous one, and would perform many wonderful and dangerous feats. He would jump from the flies—that is, from the curtains above the stage—down on to the stage itself, and do many other things equally surprising. To enable himself to go through these performances without danger, he always occupied a very long time in dressing for the part, and adjusting no fewer than nine strong pads about his person in such a manner as to protect those parts of his frame which were the most liable to injury,—wearing one on the head, one round the shoulders, one round the hips, two on the elbows, two on the knees, and two on the heels of his shoes. Thus armed, he would proceed to throw and knock himself about in a manner which, to those unacquainted with his precautions, appeared to indicate an intense anxiety to meet with some severe, if not fatal accident. Grimaldi, on the contrary, never wore any padding in his life; nor did he attempt any of the great exploits which distinguished Bradbury. His Clown was of a much more com-

posed and subdued temperament, although much more comical and amusing, as is sufficiently shown by the result of the comparison between the two which has just been described. Bradbury was very original withal, and copied no one; for he had struck out a peculiar line for himself, and never departed from it.

After the night at Sadlers Wells, Grimaldi heard nothing more of Bradbury for some time; but at length received a note from him, dated, to his excessive surprise, from a private madhouse at Hoxton, requesting him to visit him there without delay, as he was exceedingly anxious to see him. He was much astonished at this request, as little or no intimacy had previously existed between them, and the place where the letter was dated was so very unexpected and startling. Not knowing what to do, he showed the letter to his friend Lawrence, who recommended him by all means to go, and volunteered to accompany him.

As he gladly availed himself of this offer, they went together to Hoxton, and inquiring at the appointed place, were introduced to Bradbury, who was a patient in the asylum, and had submitted to the customary regulations: all his hair

being shaved off, and his person being kept under strict restraint. Concluding that he had a maniac to deal with, Grimaldi spoke in a very gentle, quiet manner, which the patient observing, burst into a roar of laughter.

"My dear fellow," said Bradbury, "don't look and speak to me in that way!—for though you find me here, treated as a patient, and with my head shaved, Iam no more mad than you are."

Grimaldi rather doubted this assurance, knowing it to be a common one with insane people, and therefore kept at a respectful distance. He was not long in discovering, however, that what Bradbury said was perfectly true. The circumstances which had led to his confinement in the lunatic asylum were briefly these.

Bradbury was a very dashing person, keeping a tandem, and associating with many gentlemen and men of title. Upon one occasion when he had been playing at Plymouth, a man-of-war was coming round from that town to Portsmouth, on board of which he had several friends among the officers, who took him on board with them. It was agreed that they should sup together at Portsmouth. A splendid

meal having been prepared, they spent the night, or at least the larger portion of it, in great hilarity. As morning approached, Bradbury rose to retire, and then, with considerable surprise, discovered that a magnificent gold snuff-box, with a gold chain attached, which he was accustomed to wear in his fob, and which he had placed on the table for the use of his friends, had disappeared. He mentioned the circumstance, and a strict search was immediately instituted, but with no other effect than that of proving that the valuable box was gone. When every possible conjecture had been hazarded, and inquiry made without success, it was recollected that one of their companions, a young gentleman already writing "Honourable" before his name, and having a coronet in no very remote perspective, had retired from the table almost immediately after supper: — it was suggested that he might have taken it in jest, for the purpose of alarming its owner.

Bradbury and several others went to this gentleman's room, and communicated to him the loss, and their doubts respecting him. The young gentleman positively denied any knowledge of the box, and, after bitterly reproaching them for their

suspicions, abruptly closed the door in their faces, leaving Bradbury in a state of violent mortification at his loss.

On the following morning, nothing more having been heard of the missing property, the gentleman, against whom Bradbury now nourished many serious misgivings, sent down word to his friends, that he was so much vexed with them for their conduct of the night before, in supposing it possible he could have taken anything away even in jest, that he should not join them at breakfast, but, on the contrary, should immediately return to town. This message, instead of allaying, as it was doubtless intended to do, Bradbury's suspicions, caused him to think still worse of the matter; and upon ascertaining that the young man had actually taken a place in the next coach which started for London, he lost no time in obtaining a warrant, by virtue of which he took him prisoner just as he was stepping into the coach. Upon searching his portmanteau, the box was found, together with several articles belonging to his other companions. Bradbury was determined to prosecute, not considering the young gentleman's nobility any palliation of the

theft; he was instantly taken before a magistrate, and fully committed for trial.

No sooner did this affair become known to the relatives and connexions of the offender, than, naturally anxious to preserve the good name of the family, they proceeded to offer large sums to Bradbury if he would relinquish the prosecution, —all of which proposals he, for some time, steadily refused. At length they offered him a handsome annuity firmly secured for the whole of his life: he was not proof against this temptation, and at length signified his readiness to accept the bribe.

The next point to be considered was, how Bradbury could accept the money without compounding a felony, and increasing the obloquy already cast upon the thief. He hit upon and carried into execution a most singular plan: — he caused the report to be circulated that he had suddenly become insane — committed many extravagant acts — and in a short time was, apparently against his own will, but in reality by his own contrivance, deprived of his liberty, and conveyed to the asylum where Grimaldi visited him. The consequence of this step was, that when the stealer of the snuff-box was placed upon

his trial, no prosecutor appearing, he was adjudged not guilty, and liberated accordingly. Intelligence of this was directly sent to Bradbury, who proceeded to make arrangements for his own release: this was soon effected, and it was on the eve of the day of his departure that Grimaldi saw him in the madhouse. His only object in writing, or rather, in causing the letter to be written, for he could not write a line himself, nor read either, was, to ask him to play for his ensuing benefit at the Surrey Theatre, which he readily consented to do; then wishing him a speedy deliverance from his disagreeable abode, he took his departure.

The next day Bradbury came out of the asylum, telling everybody that he was perfectly recovered, having got well in as sudden a manner as he fell ill, and in the following week his benefit took place. Grimaldi played and sang for him, and took money at the gallery-door, to boot. The house was quite full, and everything went on well until Bradbury made his appearance, when, impelled by some strange and sudden whim, he was guilty of a disgusting piece of irreverence and impertinence. The consequence of this was, that

the audience very naturally and properly took great offence, and upon a repetition of the conduct, literally hooted him from the stage.

This was the ruin of Bradbury as a pantomimist. He did not appear again in London for many years, and although he played occasionally in the country theatres, never afterwards regained his former rank and celebrity in the profession. As far as pecuniary matters were concerned, it did not matter much to him, the annuity affording him a handsome independence; but whether he afterwards sold it and dissipated the money, or whether the annuity itself was discontinued in the course of years, this at least is certain, that when he died, which he did in London in 1828, he was in very indifferent circumstances, if not in actual want.

In October, Covent Garden commenced the new campaign, and brought forward Mother Goose, which ran with the same degree of success as before until near Christmas, and was played altogether twenty-nine times.

On the 15th of this month, a most frightful accident occurred at Sadlers Wells. The pantomime was played first that night, which, joined to

his having nothing to do at Covent Garden, enabled Grimaldi to go home early to bed. At midnight he was awakened by a great noise in the street, and loud and repeated knocks at the door of his house. At first he concluded it might be some idle party amusing themselves by knocking and running away, — an intellectual amusement not at that time exclusively confined to a few gentlemen of high degree; but finding that it was repeated, and that the noise without, increased, he hastily slipped on a morning-gown and trousers, and hurried to the street-door.

The people who were clamouring outside were for the most part friends, who exclaimed, when he appeared, that they had merely come to assure themselves of his personal safety, and were rejoiced to find that he had escaped. He now learned, for the first time, that some vagabonds in the pit of the theatre had raised a cry of "Fire!" during the performance of the last piece, "The Ocean Fiend," and that the audience had risen simultaneously to make their escape; that a violent rush towards the doors had ensued, and that in the confusion and fright, a most fearful loss of life had taken place. He waited to hear no more, but instantly ran off to the theatre.

On arriving there, he found the crowd of people collected around it so dense as to render approach by the usual path impossible. Filled with anxiety, and determined to ascertain the real state of the case, he ran round to the opposite bank of the New River, plunged in, swam across, and finding the parlour window open and a light at the other end of the room, threw up the sash and jumped in *à la Harlequin*. What was his horror, on looking round, to discover that there lay stretched in the apartment no fewer than nine dead bodies! Yes! there lay the remains of nine human beings, lifeless, and scarcely yet cold, whom a few hours back he had been himself exciting to shouts of laughter. Paralysed by the sad sight, he stood awhile without the power of motion; then, hurrying to the door, hastily sought to rid himself of the dreadful scene. It was locked without, and he vainly strove to open it, so knocked violently for assistance. At first the family of Mr. Hughes were greatly terrified at hearing these sounds issuing from a room tenanted, as they imagined, only by the dead; but at length recognising the voice, they unlocked the door, and he gladly emerged from the apartment.

It was not known until next day how many lives were lost; but when the actual loss of life could be ascertained, it appeared that twenty-three people, male and female, were killed, not to mention many dangerous and severe accidents. This melancholy catastrophe was mainly attributable to the imprudence of those persons who reached the theatre-doors first, and who, upon finding that nothing really was the matter, sought to return to their places. The meeting of the two crowds in the passages caused a complete stoppage; and this leading the people inside to believe that all egress was blocked up, impelled them to make violent efforts to escape, for the most part fatal to the unfortunate persons who tried them. Several people flung themselves from the gallery into the pit, others rushed hopelessly into the densest part of the crowd and were suffocated, others were trodden under foot, and hence the melancholy result.

This accident happening on the last night but four of the season, it was deemed prudent not to reopen the house that year. Such performers as were entitled to benefits and had not yet taken them, took them at the Circus; and thus

terminated the season of 1807,—the most melancholy termination of a season which Sadlers Wells Theatre had ever known.

On the 26th of December was produced "Harlequin in his Element, or Fire, Water, Earth, and Air," in which Bologna and Grimaldi were the Harlequin and Clown. It was highly successful, and in Grimaldi's opinion deservedly so, for he always considered it one of the best pantomimes in which he ever played. During this season he also performed in an unsuccessful melodrama entitled "Bonifacio and Bridgetino," and also Baptiste in "Raymond and Agnes," which latter piece went off very well and was repeated several times.

At this time he had a cottage at Finchley, to which place he used to drive down in his gig after the performances. If there were no rehearsal, he remained there until the following afternoon; if there were, he returned to town immediately after breakfast. His principal reason for taking the house originally, was, that his young son, of whom he was extremely fond, might have the benefit of country air; but both he and his wife became so much attached to it, that when his

original term expired, he renewed the lease, and retained it altogether for several years.

He met with numerous little adventures during these night-drives after the theatre: sometimes he fell asleep as soon as he had turned out of town, and only awoke when he arrived at his own gate. One night he was so fatigued with his performance, that he still continued to sleep when the horse (a very steady one, who could always find his way home without assistance) had stopped at the gate. The best of it was, that upon this particular night the man-servant, who always sat up for him, had fallen asleep too; so there sat he slumbering on one side of the fence, while on the other side, not six feet off, sat his master in the gig fast asleep too. And so they both remained until the violent snorting of the horse, which probably thought it high time to turn in for the night, awoke the man, who roused the master and speedily set all to rights. But as one circumstance which occurred to him during these night journeys will be found narrated at greater length in another part of this volume, we will leave the subject for the present.

He very grievously offended Mr. Fawcett in

George Cruikshank

Like Master like Man

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March 1808, from a very slight cause, and without the remotest intention of doing so. Fawcett called at his cottage at Finchley one afternoon, on his road to town from his own house at Totteridge, which was only two miles distant from Grimaldi's, and asked Grimaldi to play for his benefit, then close at hand: this he most willingly promised to do.

"Ah," said Fawcett, "but, understand I don't want you to play Clown or anything of that sort: I want you to do Brocket, in the Son-in-Law."

Grimaldi demurred a little to this proposition, considering that as he had made a great hit in one branch of his profession, he could not do better than retain his standing in it, without attempting some new line in which, by failure, he might injure his reputation. Not wishing to disoblige Mr. Fawcett if he could possibly help it, he replied, that he must decline giving an answer at that moment, but that in the course of a day or two he would write. Having consulted his friends in the mean time, and being strongly advised by them not to appear in the character Mr. Fawcett had mentioned, he wrote, declining in respectful terms to do so, and stating the grounds of his

objection. Odd as it may appear, the little circumstance angered him much: he never afterwards behaved towards him with any cordiality, and for the three years immediately following, never so much as spoke to or noticed him whenever they chanced to meet.

On the 14th, he received permission from Mr. Kemble to play for his sister-in-law's benefit at the Birmingham theatre, which was then under the management of Mr. Macready, the father of the great tragedian. Immediately upon his arrival, Grimaldi repaired to his hotel, and was welcomed by Mr. Macready with much cordiality and politeness, proposing that he should remain in Birmingham two or, if possible, three nights after the benefit at which he was announced to perform, and offering terms of the most liberal description. Anticipating a proposal of this nature, Grimaldi had, before he left town, inquired what the performances were likely to be at Covent Garden for some days to come. Finding that if the existing arrangements were adhered to, he could not be wanted for at least a week, he had resolved to accept any good offer that might be made to him at Birmingham, and therefore closed with Mr.

Macready without hesitation. After breakfast they walked together to the theatre to rehearse; and here Grimaldi discovered a great lack of those adjuncts of stage effect technically known as "properties;" there were no tricks, nor indeed was there anything requisite for pantomimic business. After vainly endeavouring to devise some means by which the requisite articles could be dispensed with, he mentioned his embarrassment to the manager.

"What! properties?" exclaimed that gentleman; "wonderful! you London stars require a hundred things, where we country people are content with one: however, whatever you want you shall have. —Here, Will, go down to the market and buy a small pig, a goose, and two ducks. Mr. Grimaldi wants some properties, and must have them." The man grinned, took the money, and went away. After some reflection, Grimaldi decided in his own mind that the manager's directions had been couched in some peculiar phrases common to the theatre, and at once went about arranging six pantomime scenes, with which the evening's entertainments were to conclude. While he was thus engaged, a violent uproar and loud shouts of

laughter hailed the return of the messenger, who, having fulfilled his commission to the very letter, presented him with a small pig, a goose, and two ducks, all alive, and furthermore with Mr. Macready's compliments, and he deeply regretted to say that those were all the properties in the house.

He accepted them with many thanks, and arranged a little business accordingly. He caused the old man in the pantomime and his daughter to enter, immediately after the rising of the curtain, as though they had just come back from market, while he himself, as Clown and their servant, followed, carrying their purchases. He dressed himself in an old livery coat with immense pockets, and a huge cocked hat: both were, of course, over his Clown's costume. At his back he carried a basket laden with carrots and turnips; stuffed a duck into each pocket, leaving their heads hanging out; carried the pig under one arm, and the goose under the other. Thus fitted and attired, he presented himself to the audience, and was received with roars of laughter. His songs were all encored — Tippitywitchit three times, and the hit was most decided. The house

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was full to the ceiling, and it was equally full on the following night, when he played Scaramouch; the third night was as good as any of the preceding, and the fourth, which terminated his engagement, was as successful as the rest. Just as he was going on the stage on this last evening, and had even taken up his "properties" for that purpose, a note was put into his hands, which was dated that morning, and had just arrived from London, whence it had been despatched with all possible speed. He opened it hastily, and read, in the hand of an intimate friend,

"Dear Joe,—They have announced you to play to-morrow night at Covent Garden; and as they know you have not returned from Birmingham, I fear it is done to injure you. Lose not a moment, but start immediately on the receipt of this."

He instantly ran to Mr. Macready, and showing him the letter, told him, that although he was very sorry to disappoint his Birmingham friends, he could not stop to play.

"Not stop to play!" echoed the manager;

" why, my good fellow, they will pull the house down. You must stop to play, and post up to London afterwards. I 'll take care that a chaise and four are waiting for you at the stage-door, and that everything shall be ready for you to start, the moment you have finished your business."

He played with the same success to a brilliant house, received 294*l.* from the manager as his remuneration for three nights, threw himself into the chaise, and at twelve o'clock, within a few minutes after he had quitted the stage, was on his road to London.

The weather was tempestuous, the roads in a most desperate condition, and, to make matters worse, he treated the postboys so liberally, in the hope of accelerating their speed, that they became so drunk as to be scarcely able to sit their horses. After various escapes and perils, they discovered, at the end of an unusually long stage, that they had come fourteen miles out of the road, " all in consequence," as one of the boys said, with many hiccups and much drunken gravity, — " all in consequence of only taking one wrong turn."

The result of this combination of mischances

was, that he did not reach Salt Hill until seven o'clock on the following evening, having been nineteen hours on the road. Here he jumped into another chaise which fortunately stood ready at the door, and hurried up to London without venturing to stay for any refreshment whatever. He drove straight to the theatre, where he found his friend awaiting his arrival with great trepidation. Hearing that the overture to the piece in which he was to perform was then playing, he gave his friend the 294*l.* to take care of, ran to his dressing-room, dressed for his part which Farley had already made preparations for performing himself, and went on the stage the moment he got his cue, much to the astonishment of his friends, and greatly to the surprise of some individuals connected with the management of the theatre, who had anticipated a very different result from his visit to Birmingham.

CHAPTER XV.

1808 to 1809.

Govent Garden Theatre destroyed by fire.—Grimaldi makes a trip to Manchester: he meets with an accident there, and another at Liverpool.—The Sir Hugh Middleton Tavern at Sadlers Wells, and a description of some of its frequenters, necessary to a full understanding of the succeeding chapter.

Of course some unforeseen circumstance was to happen, and some unexpected demand to be made on the money so easily earned. A short time before he went to Birmingham, being short of cash, he had commissioned a friend on whom he placed great reliance to get his bill at one month for 150*l.* discounted. The friend put the bill into his pocket-book, and promised to bring the money at night. Night came, but the money did not; it had not arrived when he returned from Birmingham; the friend was nowhere to be found, and he had soon afterwards the satisfaction of paying the whole sum, without having received a sixpence of the money.

During the season of 1808 at Sadlers Wells, the principal and most successful part he had was in a burletta called "Oddfish, or Mrs. Scaite in the Seraglio." His two benefits were bumpers, and the theatre closed on the 26th of September, after another most profitable campaign.

The Covent Garden season, which had terminated on the 13th of July, recommenced on the 12th of September. Seven days afterwards the theatre was burned to the ground, after the performance of Pizarro, and the portrait of Cervantes. The company removed to the Italian Opera-house, and subsequently to the Haymarket; but as Grimaldi was not wanted, he availed himself of an offer to visit the Manchester theatre, then managed by Messrs. Ward, Lewis, and Knight, and left town for that purpose. There was a strong rivalry between the coach proprietors on the road at that time, but, for the safety of the passengers, it was expressly understood between them that the coaches should never be allowed to pass each other, but that the coach which took the lead at starting should retain it all the way through, unless any temporary stoppage of the first vehicle enabled the second to assume the

post of honour. Grimaldi's coach was the last, and just as they were going into Macclesfield, the Defiance (which was the name of the other coach), stopping to change horses and to allow the passengers to take tea, became entangled with the wheels of the second vehicle in the darkness of the evening; and when the second coach overset, which it did immediately, the empty Defiance fell upon the top of it so neatly and dexterously, that the passengers were obliged to be dragged through the two coaches before they could be extricated. Fortunately nobody was much hurt; although Grimaldi was the worst off, for he was the undermost, and five stout men (they carried six insides at that time) fell on the top of him. The only disagreeable part of the matter was, that they were delayed upwards of four hours, and that the unfortunate Defiance was left both literally and figuratively *on* the road, for a much longer time.

During this provincial trip he played six nights at Manchester and one at Liverpool, for which he received in all 25*l*. The only drawback upon the expedition was that he sustained two accidents, the effects of which were quite bad enough, but

might have been much more serious. He arranged and got up a very pretty little pantomime called "Castles in the Air," in which he of course played Clown. His first appearance was to be from a large bowl, placed in the centre of the stage, and labelled "Gooseberry fool;" to pass through which it was necessary for him to ascend from beneath the stage through a trap-door which the bowl concealed. On the first night of the piece, he ascended from below at the proper time; but when he gained the level of the stage, the ropes which were attached to the trap broke, and he fell back into the cellar from which he had just risen. He was terribly shaken and stunned by the fall, but quickly recovering himself, ascended the stairs, went on the stage, and played as though nothing had happened to discompose him. In spite of his assumed calmness, however, he was in agony during the whole of the first scene; but the pain wholly left him as he went on, in the excitement of the part, and by the time he had finished the pantomime, he was as well as he had been before its commencement.

This was at Manchester. The Liverpool Theatre belonging to the same managers, and being

resorted to by the same company, they all travelled thither for one night for the purpose of playing "Castles in the Air" as the afterpiece, having the same master-carpenter with them as they had had at Manchester. Grimaldi sought the man out, and explaining to him the nature of the accident which had happened through his negligence on the previous night, entreated him to render all secure for that evening, and to prevent a repetition of the occurrence. This he promised, but failed to do notwithstanding, for a precisely similar accident took place here. Grimaldi had ascended to the stage, and got his head through the bowl, when, as a shout of laughter and welcome broke from the audience, the ropes gave way and he was left struggling in the trap. For a second or two he did not fall; for, having passed through the trap nearly to his waist, he strove to support himself by his arms. All his endeavours, however, were vain; the weight of his body pulled him downwards, and the trap being small, his elbows were caught by the edges and forced together above his head, thereby straining his shoulders to such an extent that he thought his arms were wrested from their sockets. He fell a consider-

able distance, and when he rose from the ground was in excessive pain. He managed with great difficulty to crawl through the first scene, and then warming with his exertions and kindling with the great applause he received, rallied successfully and got through the part with flying colours.

When he reached his inn, which, now that the excitement of acting was over, was a task of considerable difficulty, he was well rubbed with the infallible embrocation and put to bed in a very helpless state. On the following morning, scarcely able to crawl, he was assisted into the coach and returned home.

Grimaldi acted very little at the Haymarket with the Covent Garden company till after Christmas, when "Mother Goose" was revived, with a new last scene, representing the ruins of Covent Garden Theatre transformed by a touch of Harlequin's wand into a new and splendid building. In March he sustained for the first time the character of Kanko in "La Perouse." He took his benefit on the 23rd of May. The season terminated a few nights afterwards; and with it, it may be incidentally observed, terminated the theatrical career

of the celebrated Lewis, who retired from the stage at this period.

Sadlers Wells presented no particular novelty in 1809. Its chief production was a piece called "Johnnie Armstrong," in which Grimaldi played Kirstie, a kind of "Touchstone:" it was very successful, and the season closed, as all the Sadlers Wells seasons did at that time, with great profits.

Before adverting to the little adventure arising out of one of the nocturnal rides to which reference has been already made, it will be necessary to mention a few circumstances upon which such interest as it possesses mainly depends.

The pantomime was usually played first at Sadlers Wells. When this was the case, Grimaldi was at liberty by about half-past eight; he would sometimes call at the Sir Hugh Myddelton and take a glass of wine and water with some friends who frequented the house, and then start off in his gig to Finchley.

He had several times met at this tavern a young man of the name of George Hamilton, a working jeweller residing somewhere about Clerkenwell, a sociable good-tempered merry fellow enough, but rather too much addicted to drinking and squan-

dering his money. This man was very sensitive upon the subject of trade, being, as the phrase goes, above his business, having an ambition to be a gentleman, and resenting any allusion to his occupation as a personal affront. He was a very ingenious and skilful man at his business, and could earn a great deal of money; but his companions suspected that these absurdities led him into spending more than he could well afford. Grimaldi was so strongly impressed with this opinion, that, with a good-hearted impulse, he frequently felt tempted to remonstrate with him upon his folly. Their slight intimacy, however, restrained him, and the man continued to take his own course.

These were his mental peculiarities: he had a remarkable physical peculiarity besides, wanting, either from an accident or a natural defect, the third finger of his left hand. Whether he wished to conceal this imperfection, or had some other defect in the same hand, is uncertain, but he invariably kept his little finger in a bent position beneath the palm of it; so that when he sat or walked, as he usually did with his left hand half hidden in his pocket, the defect was not observable; but when

he suddenly changed his position or drew forth his hand in discourse, it had always the appearance of having only two fingers upon it.

Grimaldi's first acquaintance with this person was in 1808, when he was very frequently at Sadlers Wells and the Sir Hugh Myddelton. At the termination of the summer season he lost sight of him, in consequence of his engagements taking him elsewhere; but in Easter 1809, when Sadlers Wells reopened, and Grimaldi resumed his habit of calling at the tavern for half an hour or so before driving out to Finchley, he again encountered him. He had been married in the interval, and frequently took his wife, a pretty young creature, to the tavern with him, as at that time many tradesmen in the neighbourhood were accustomed to do.

Grimaldi paid little attention to these circumstances at first; but a change had come over the man which irresistibly attracted his attention. He had become very violent and irritable,—had acquired a nervous restlessness of manner, an occasional incoherence of speech, a wildness of look, and betrayed many other indications of a mind somewhat disordered. He dressed differently

too: formerly he had been neatly attired, and looked like a respectable, well-doing man; but now he was showy and gaudy, wore a number of large rings and other articles of cheap jewellery, and his desire to be thought a great man had increased greatly,—so much so, indeed, that his declamations against trade and all concerned in it, deeply affronted the worthies who were wont to assemble at the Sir Hugh, and occasioned many disputes and altercations.

All these things evidently made the wife very unhappy. Although he usually abstained from drinking to his customary excess in her presence, he said and did enough to make her wretched, and frequently, when she thought she was unobserved, she would sit in a remote corner and weep bitterly.

One night Hamilton, for such was his name, brought with him a new friend, a man of very sinister appearance and marvellously ill-favoured countenance. They were, or affected to be, both greatly intoxicated. The strange man was introduced by his friend to Grimaldi, and began entering into conversation with him; but as there was something remarkably repulsive in his appearance, he rose and left the room.

The two men came together very often. Nobody knew who or what the stranger was, nobody liked or even spoke to him ; and it was constantly observed that whenever Hamilton was in a state of gross intoxication, he was in this person's company. The old visitors of the Sir Hugh shook their heads mysteriously, and hoped he had not fallen into bad company ; although, truth to tell, they could not help thinking that appearances were greatly against him.

One night Grimaldi was sitting alone in the room, reading the newspaper, when Hamilton, the stranger, and the poor wife came in together. The former was in a state of intoxication, so much so that he could scarcely stand. The wife had evidently been crying, and seemed truly wretched ; but the strange man wore an air of dogged triumph which made him look perfectly hideous.

Curious to see what passed, Grimaldi held the paper before his face and watched them closely. They did not recognise him, but walked to the other end of the room. Hamilton hiccoughed forth an order for something to drink, stammering in reply to the earnest entreaties of his wife, that

he would go home directly he had taken "this one glass more." It was brought but not tasted, for his head had fallen upon the table and he was fast asleep before the liquor came.

The man whom he had a minute before named for the first time—Archer he called him—regarded his sleeping companion in silence for some minutes, and then leaning behind him to reach the wife, who was on the other side, touched her lightly on the shoulder. She looked up, and he, pointing with a contemptuous air to the sleeping drunkard, took her hand and pressed it in a manner which it was impossible to misunderstand. She started indignantly from her seat, and darted at the man a look which completely quelled him. He sat with his arms folded and his eyes fixed on the ground for above a quarter of an hour, and then, suddenly rousing himself, tendered his assistance in attempting to awaken the husband. His harsh voice and rough gestures accomplished what the whispered persuasion of the wife had been unable to effect: Hamilton awoke, emptied his glass, and they all left the apartment together: she studiously avoiding any contact with the man called Archer.

This little scene interested the observer much. He sat thinking upon what had passed, so long, that he was upwards of an hour later than usual in reaching home. He felt a strong inclination to speak to Hamilton, and kindly but firmly to tell him what he had seen and what he thought. On consideration, however, he determined not to interfere, deeming it more prudent to leave the issue to the good sense and proper feeling of his wife, who evidently knew what danger threatened her, and how to avert it.

The situation of these persons had occupied so much of his thoughts, that when he called as usual at the tavern next night, he felt a strong anxiety to meet them there again. He was disappointed, for Hamilton was seated in the room alone. He nodded as Grimaldi entered, and said,

"Are you going to Finchley to-night?"

"No," was the reply; "I wish I was: I have an engagement at my house here in town which will prevent my doing so."

"I thought you always went there on summer evenings," said Hamilton, glancing over the paper as he spoke, and speaking in an uninterested and careless style.

"No, not always," said Grimaldi: "pretty nearly though—five nights out of six."

"Then you 'll go to-morrow?" asked Hamilton.

"Oh, certainly! to-morrow, and every night this week except to-night."

They exchanged a "Good-evening!" and parted.

It so happened that Grimaldi was reluctantly obliged to remain in town, not only next night, but the night after also, in consequence of the arrival in town of some country friends. On the third night, the 9th of July, he called at the tavern to take his usual glass, before mounting his gig, and, his mind being still occupied with thoughts of the poor young woman and her dissipated husband, he inquired whether Hamilton had been there that night. The reply was, that he had not: he had not been there for three evenings, or, in other words, since he had seen and spoken to him.

When Grimaldi produced his purse to pay for the wine and water he had drunk, he found he had nothing but two five-pound notes. He gave the waiter one, requesting change, and put the other in his waistcoat pocket. He usually carried notes in a pocket-book, but upon this evening he

did not happen to have it about him; in fact, he had received the notes very unexpectedly while he was in the theatre, from a person who owed him money. He put the change in his purse, got into the gig, and drove homeward.

On that particular evening Grimaldi had a call to make in Tottenham Court Road, which delayed him for some little time. As he was passing through Kentish Town, a friend who was standing at his door, the weather being sultry, insisted upon his coming in and taking a glass of wine: this detained him again, as they stood chatting for half an hour or so, and by the time he had resumed his journey homewards it was near the middle of the night.

CHAPTER XVI.

1809.

His Adventure on Highgate Hill, and its consequences.

It was a fine, clear night; there was no moon, but the stars were shining brightly; the air was soft and fresh, and very pleasant after the heat of the day. Grimaldi drove on at a quicker pace than usual, fearing that they might be alarmed at home by his being so late, and having just heard some distant clock strike the three quarters after eleven. Suddenly the horse stopped.

Near the spot was a ridge across the road for the purpose of draining the fields on the higher side, forming a little hollow, which in the summer was dry, and in the winter generally full of mud. The horse knew it well, being accustomed to pause there for a minute, to cross the ditch slowly, and then to resume his usual trot. Bending forward to assure himself that he had arrived at this part of the road, Grimaldi heard a low

whistle, and immediately afterwards three men darted out of a hedge. One seized the horse's bridle, and the two others rushed up, one to each side of the gig; then, presenting pistols, they demanded his money.

Grimaldi sat for a moment quite incapable of speaking, the surprise had come so suddenly upon him; but hearing the cocking of a pistol close beside him, he roused himself, and, seeing that he had no chance against three armed men, cried,

"Mercy, gentlemen, mercy!"

"You won't be hurt," said the man on his left, "so long as you give your money directly."

"No, no," said the man on his right, "you won't be hurt. Your money is what we want."

"You shall have it," he answered; "but I expect you not to injure me." He fumbled at his pocket for his purse, and while doing so looked narrowly at the persons by whom he was attacked. They all wore black crape over their faces, so that not a feature was discernible, and were clad in very large black frocks. The disguises were complete; it was impossible to make out anything of their appearance.

"Look sharp!" said the left-hand man; "the money!—come, we can't stay here."

Grimaldi extricated the purse and handed it to the speaker. The man at the horse's head looked sharply on, and cried,

"Tom, what has he given you?"

"His purse," was the reply.

"That won't do," said the man. "You have more money about you; I know you have: come, hand over, will ye?"

"I have not indeed," replied Grimaldi. "Sometimes I carry a little in my pocket-book; but to-night I forgot to bring it with me."

"You have more money with you, and you know it," said the man who held the bridle: "you have got a bank-note in your left-hand waistcoat pocket."

The circumstance had really escaped Grimaldi's memory; but being reminded of it, he drew forth the note and delivered it to the man to whom he had resigned his purse.

"It's all right, Tom," said the man on his right; "we had better be off now."

As the man spoke, he moved round the back of

the gig, as if with the intention of going away. It was the first time he had uttered a word, and his voice struck Grimaldi as being a familiar one, though he could not in his confusion recollect where or when he had heard it. He had no time to reflect on the matter, for the man at the horse's head demanded of the man on his left whether he had got his watch.

"No," said the fellow, "I forgot his watch. Give it here!" With these words he again raised his pistol, which had been all this time and still was on full cock.

Grimaldi gave it up, but not without a sigh, for it was the very watch which had been presented to him with his own portrait on the dial-plate. As he put it into the man's hand, he said,

"If you knew who I am, you would not treat me in this manner."

"Oh, we know you well enough, Mr. Grimaldi," said the man at the reins: "we have been waiting for you these three nights, and began to think you would not come to-night."

The other men laughed, and the man whose voice had struck him, recommended his companion to give the watch back again.

"Oh yes, I dare say!" said the man with a sneer, who held the horse.

"Well, I don't know," said the fellow who had been addressed as "Tom,"—"I don't think it's worth a couple of pounds."

"No, no, it is not; and besides, I say he shall have it again," cried the man, whose voice, familiar at first, now seemed perfectly well known to Grimaldi. "Here!" He snatched the watch from his comrade's hand (who made no effort to retain it), and handed it into the gig. Grimaldi gladly received it back; but in the act of doing so, he saw that the hand from which he took it had, or appeared to have, *but two fingers upon it.*

The watch was no sooner returned than the robbers made off with great rapidity, and he was once again alone in a far greater state of alarm and trepidation than when the robbers surrounded him. The revulsion of feeling was so great, that he felt as if his existence depended upon instant flight, and that his flight would be far more speedy if he ran than if he rode. Acting upon the impulse of his disordered nerves, he sprang at once out of the gig, but not jumping sufficiently high to clear it, was thrown into the road head

foremost with great force, and struck his temple heavily against a flint. The blow and the previous fright quite bewildered him, but did not render him insensible; he was up again directly, and found himself at the expiration of some ten minutes stopped by the patrol, to whom he was well known. He had no recollection of running, but he had run for a long distance, and the first thing he was conscious of, was being half supported by this man, and receiving many eager inquiries what had befallen him.

Grimaldi spoke as plainly as his agitation would permit, and related what had passed.

"Just what I have expected to happen to somebody for these many nights past," said the patrol. "Sir, I have watched those three men repeatedly; it was only last night I warned 'em that I did not like to see them loitering about my beat, and that if anything wrong happened I should suspect them. Make your mind easy, sir; I know where they are to be found, and I lay my life that in less than two hours I have them safe."

"And what am I to do?" Grimaldi inquired.

"Nothing to-night, sir," was the patrol's re-

ply: "I would only recommend you to get home as fast as you can. At twelve o'clock to-morrow, you attend at Bow Street; and if I don't show you the men, I shall be as much surprised as you have been to-night."

The horse came up just then, having trotted on very composedly with the gig at his heels: taking the patrol's advice, Grimaldi got in, and having promised to meet him next morning, made the best of his way home, which he reached without further hindrance or interruption.

Grimadli found his wife, as he had expected, very much terrified at his being so late; nor were her fears allayed by his wild demeanour and the appearance of the blow on his temple. To her hurried inquiries he gave the best answers that occurred to him, and being unwilling to give her any unnecessary alarm, merely remarked that he had a fall from his gig which had made him giddy and uncomfortable. The pains he afterwards took to keep the real truth from coming to her knowledge were infinite. Every newspaper that came into the house he carefully searched to ascertain that it contained no paragraph relative to the robbery, and so successful were his precautions,

that she had not the least inkling of the circumstance until more than two years afterwards, upon their giving up the cottage at Finchley and returning to town; when her first exclamation was, "Oh, Joe, if I had only known this at the time, I never could have slept another night in Finchley!"

This was exactly what Grimaldi had supposed, and he was not a little delighted to find, that he had been enabled to remain during the whole of that time in a place to which he was very much attached, and where, in the society of his wife and child, he had spent some of the happiest hours of his existence.

Grimaldi got very little sleep after the robbery, his thoughts turning all night upon the distressing consequences it seemed likely to involve. That Hamilton was one of the men, he felt pretty well sure: the voice and the defect in the left hand were strong proofs against him. Added to this, there was other evidence, circumstantial, it is true, but still very weighty. It was plain from the knowledge which one of the thieves possessed relative to the note, that he or some one connected with him had been at the tavern in the earlier part of the night, and had there closely watched

his actions; the doubtful character of Archer, and his suspicious looks and manner, had struck him often; the thieves had been waiting three nights, and for three nights Hamilton had been absent from his usual place of resort. The more he thought of these things, the more sure he felt that Hamilton was a highwayman: then came the reflection, that if upon his evidence he was sentenced to death, it would most probably involve the fate of his young wife, of whose meekness and gentleness he had seen so many tokens. He tossed and tumbled through the night meditating upon these things over and over again; he rose the following morning feverish and dejected, trusting that the thieves might escape rather than that he should be the means of bringing any of his fellow-creatures to a violent death, or dooming others to living and hopeless wretchedness.

Pleading an early call to rehearsal as the reason for his going so early to town, he left Finchley immediately after breakfast, and drove to Bow Street, where he found the patrol already waiting. The moment he caught sight of the man and observed the air with which he approached to receive him, all the hopes which he had involuntarily

nourished, evaporated, and he felt terrified at the thought that a capital prosecution at the Old Bailey was certainly reserved for him.

"Well, sir," said the man as he helped him out of the gig, "it's all right. I have got three men, and I have no doubt they are the fellows."

Grimaldi's distress was redoubled, and he inquired, trembling, whether any of the stolen property had been found upon them.

The man replied, with evident chagrin, that he had not succeeded so far, and therefore supposed that they had got rid of the booty before he found them; but if they were sworn to, they would be committed at once; and that when it was known among their companions, he had little doubt but that he should be able to trace out some evidence relative to the note. With this brief preparation he led Grimaldi at once into the presence of the magistrate, to whom he recounted the particulars of the robbery, hinting that as he had not been personally injured by the thieves, he had no wish to prosecute if it could be avoided; — an intimation to which the patrol listened in high dudgeon, and which the magistrate appeared to regard with some doubt, merely observing that

the circumstance might possibly be taken into consideration with a view to the mitigation of punishment, but could not be urged or recognised at all in that stage of the proceedings.

The patrol was then examined, and, after stating in effect what he had stated to Grimaldi on the previous night, deposed that he had taken the prisoners into custody at a place which he named. The magistrate inquired whether any of the stolen property had been found upon them or traced, whether any such disguises as Mr. Grimaldi had described were discovered in their possession, and whether any suspicious implements offensive or defensive had been found upon them. To all these questions the patrol answered in the negative, and the magistrate then ordered that Grimaldi should be taken to view the prisoners. He also inquired if Grimaldi thought he should recognise them; who replied that he had no doubt he should know one of the men.

Grimaldi was taken into another room, and the first person he saw was, as he expected, George Hamilton himself: the other two prisoners were perfect strangers to him. They had described themselves to the magistrate as "gentlemen;" but he might have exclaimed, with young Mirabel,

" For gentlemen they have the most cut-throat appearance I ever saw."

Hamilton behaved himself with great coolness and self-possession; he advanced without the least appearance of agitation, and said,

" How do you do, Mr. Grimaldi? It is an odd circumstance, is it not, that I should be charged with robbing an old friend like you? But strange coincidences happen to all of us."

Composed as the man's manner was, if Grimaldi had entered the room with any doubt of his guilt, it was at once and entirely dispelled. The practised eye of an old actor was not so easily deceived. He had evidently made a desperate effort to assume an easy confidence of manner, knowing that upon the success with which he did so, depended his only chance of escape from the gallows.

" Why, what's this!" said the gaoler or turnkey, or whoever had accompanied them to the room. " Do you know him, sir?"

" Yes," said Grimaldi, looking hard at Hamilton, " I know him very well."

" Well, then, sir, of course you can tell whether *he* is one of the men who robbed you?"

The pause which ensued was of not more than two or three seconds' duration, but it was a trying one to two of the parties present. Hamilton looked as if he awaited the reply without fear, and acted the innocent man boldly. The turnkey and constable turned away for an instant to speak to each other; and as they did so, Grimaldi held up his left hand, turning down two of the fingers, in imitation of Hamilton's, and shook his head gravely. The man instantly understood his meaning, and saw that he was known. All his assumed fortitude forsook him; his face became ashy pale, and his whole frame trembled with inward agitation. It appeared as if he would have fallen on the floor, but he rallied a little; and after bestowing a look of intense supplication upon Grimaldi, laid his finger on his lip, and fixed his eyes on the ground.

"Well, sir," said the patrol, "there they are; can you swear to them all, or to any of them?"

A thousand thoughts crowded through Grimaldi's brain, but one was uppermost,—the desire to save this young man, whom he strongly suspected to be but a beginner in crime. After a

moment's pause, he replied, that he could not swear to any one of them.

"Then," said the turnkey to the patrol, with a meaning look, "either you have gone upon a wrong scent altogether, or these chaps have had a very narrow escape."

After informing the magistrate that it was not in his power to identify the prisoners, Grimaldi hurried away. The men were discharged in the course of the afternoon, and thus terminated the interview at the police-office.

A day or two afterwards, Hamilton called at Grimaldi's house, and, in a conversation with him, humbly acknowledged that he was one of the men who had robbed him; that he had been incited to the act partly by an anxiety to acquire money faster than he could make it in trade, and partly by the persuasions of his friend Archer; but that it was his first attempt at crime, and should be his last. He thanked his benefactor in the warmest and most grateful manner for his clemency; and Grimaldi then acquainted him with the designs of Archer upon his wife, severely reprobating the vicious habits which had led him to abandon one by whose means he might have been rendered

happy and respectable, and saved from his guilty career, and leaving her exposed to the insults of men inured to every species of villany and crime. Hamilton assured him that neither his information nor his advice was ill bestowed, and after a long interview they parted, he pouring forth his thanks and promises of reformation, and Grimaldi repeating his forgiveness and his admonitions.

Grimaldi had reason to hope that Hamilton kept his promise and shrunk from his old associates, for he resided nearly twenty years after that period in Clerkenwell, carrying on a good business, and bearing the reputation of an honest man.

At this time Grimaldi was in the habit of taking three benefits every year; that is to say, two at Sadlers Wells, and one at Covent Garden. Regularly on the morning of each of these occasions, for very many years, some person called at his house for ten box-tickets, always paying for them at the time in exactly the amount required, and leaving the house immediately, as if anxious to avoid notice. He was in the constant habit of receiving anonymous remittances for tickets, and therefore did not attach much importance to this circumstance, although it struck him as being singular in

one respect, inasmuch as the greater part of his friends who took tickets for his Sadlers Wells benefits did not take them on his Covent Garden nights, and *vice versâ*. The family became at last so used to it, that when they were sorting tickets on the night before one of his benefits, his wife would regularly say, "Don't forget to put ten on the mantelpiece for the gentleman who calls early in the morning." This continued for perhaps twelve years or more, when one day, as his servant was giving him the money paid as usual by the unknown person for his admissions, he casually inquired of the girl what kind of person in appearance this gentleman was.

"Oh, I really don't know sir," she replied; "there is nothing particular about him, except—"

"Well, except what?"

"Except, sir, that he has only got two fingers on his left hand."

The mystery was explained.

The fate of this man was truly pitiable. A neighbour's house having taken fire and being in imminent hazard of destruction, Hamilton rushed in with several others to save some children who were in danger of perishing in the flames. He

darted up stairs through the smoke and reached the second story. The instant he set his foot upon it, the whole flooring gave way, and sank with him into the mass of glowing fire below, from which his body, burnt to a cinder, was dug out some days afterwards.

CHAPTER XVII.

1809 to 1812.

Opening of the new Covent Garden Theatre. — The great O. P. Rows. — Grimaldi's first appearance as Clown in the public streets. — Temporary Embarrassments. — Great success at Cheltenham and Gloucester. — He visits Berkeley Castle, and is introduced to Lord Byron. — Fish Sauce and Apple Pie.

On the 18th of September in this year the new theatre in Covent Garden opened with Shakspeare's tragedy of Macbeth and the musical afterpiece of The Quaker, with the following casts:

MACBETH.

Duncan, King of Scotland	Mr. Chapman.
Malcolm	Mr. Claremont.
Donaldbain	Mr. Menage.
Macbeth	Mr. John Kemble.
Banquo	Mr. Murray.
Fleance	Miss Bristow.
Lenox	Mr. Cresswell.
Rosse	Mr. Brunton.
Witches	Messrs. Blanchard, Farley, and Simmons.
Lady Macbeth	Mrs. Siddons.

THE QUAKER.

Steady	Mr. Incledon.
Lubin	Mr. Taylor.
Solomon	Mr. Liston.
Gillian	Miss Bolton.
Floretta	Mrs. Liston.

It was at this period that the great O. P. Row began, of which so much has been said, and sung, and written, that little of novelty or interest could accompany the description of it here. Everybody knows that the O. P. Row originated in the indignation with which the play-going public regarded an increase in the prices of admission of one shilling each person to the boxes, and sixpence to the pit, with which was coupled a considerable increase in the number of private boxes; and everybody knows, moreover, that the before-mentioned play-going public expressed their dissatisfaction night after night in scenes of the most extraordinary and unparalleled nature. The noises made by the audience utterly overwhelmed every attempt that the actors could make to render themselves audible. Not a word that was said on the stage could be distinguished even in the front row of the pit, and the O. P. (Old

Price) rioters, fearful that the exercise of their voices would not create a sufficient uproar, were in the habit of bringing the most extraordinary variety of curious and ill-toned instruments with them, to add to the noise and discordance of the scene. One gentleman, who constantly seated himself in the boxes, regaled himself and the company with a watchman's rattle, which he sprang vigorously at short intervals throughout the performances; another took his seat regularly every night in the centre of the pit, armed with a large dustman's bell, which he rang with a perseverance and strength of arm quite astounding to all beholders;* and a party of three or four pleasant fellows brought live pigs, which were pinched at the proper times, and added considerably to the effect of the performances.

But rattles, bells, pigs, trumpets, French horns,

* The gentleman who made notes of Grimaldi's recollections subjoins a note to the effect, that the gentleman who rang the bell is a personal acquaintance of his, and that he has repeatedly heard him mention the circumstance, which he looks back upon now, as an act of thoughtless folly, but which he considered then as the performance of a sacred duty to the public. He was at that time in his nonage, studying (after a manner) the law; he is now, and has long been, editor of a newspaper published in Sussex.

sticks, umbrellas, catcalls, and bugles were not the only vocal weapons used upon these occasions: Kemble was constantly called for, constantly came on, and constantly went off again without being able to obtain a hearing. Numbers of Bow Street officers were in regular attendance; whenever they endeavoured to seize the ringleaders, the ringleaders were defended by their partisans, and numerous fights (in one of which a man was nearly killed) resulted. Scarce an evening passed without flaming speeches being made from pit, boxes, and gallery; and sometimes half a dozen speeches would be in course of delivery at the same time. The greater portion of the time of the magistrates was occupied in investigations connected with the disturbances, and this state of things continued for nearly seventy nights. Placards were exhibited in every part of the house, principally from the pit; of the quality of which effusions the following may be taken as specimens:

"*Notice to the Public.*—This house and furniture to be sold—Messrs. John Kemble and Co. declining business."

"*Notice to the Public.*—The workhouse in Covent Garden has been repaired and greatly enlarged for the use of the public."

"*Cause of Justice.*—John Bull *versus* John Kemble — verdict for the plaintiff."

A large coffin, with the inscription, "Here lies the body of New Prices, who died of the *whooping*-cough, Sept. 23, 1809, aged six days."

The instant the performances began, the audience, who had been previously sitting with their faces to the stage as audiences generally do, wheeled round to a man, and turned their backs upon it. When they concluded, which, in consequence of the fearful uproar, was frequently as early as half-past nine o'clock, they united in singing a parody on God save the King, of which the first verse ran thus:

"God save great Johnny Bull,
Long live our noble Bull,
God save John Bull!
Send him victorious,
Loud and uproarious,
With lungs like Boreas:
God save John Bull!"

Then followed the O. P. dance and a variety of speeches, and then the rioters would quietly disperse.

The opinions of the press being, as a matter of course, divided on every question, were necessarily divided upon this. The Times and Post supported the new system; in consequence of which a placard was exhibited from the pit every evening for at least a week, with the inscription,

> "The Times and Post are bought and sold,
> By Kemble's pride and Kemble's gold."

The Chronicle, on the other hand, took up the opposite side of the question, and supported the O. P. rioters with great fervour and constancy. In its columns one of the most popular of the numerous squibs on the subject appeared, which is here inserted. It may be necessary to premise that "Jack" was John Kemble; that the "Cat" was Madame Catalani, then engaged at Covent Garden Theatre, and who was much opposed at that time in consequence of her being a foreigner; and that the "boxes" were the new private boxes, among the great objects of popular execration.

" THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.

" This is the House that Jack built.

" These are the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

" These are the pigeon-holes, over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

" This is the Cat, engaged to squall to the poor, in the pigeon-holes, over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

" This is John Bull, with a bugle-horn, that hissed the Cat, engaged to squall, to the poor in the pigeon-holes, over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

" This is the thief-taker, shaven and shorn,
That took up John Bull, with his bugle-horn,
who hissed the Cat, engaged to squall to the poor, in the pigeon-holes, over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

" This is the manager, full of scorn,
Who RAISED THE PRICES to the people forlorn,
And directed the thief-taker, shaven and shorn,
To take up John Bull, with his bugle-horn,
who hissed the Cat, engaged to squall, to the poor

in the pigeon-holes, over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built."

When this had gone on for several nights Kemble sent for Grimaldi, and said, that as the people would not hear dialogue, they would try pantomime, which might perhaps suit their tastes better, and accordingly Don Juan was put up for the next night, Grimaldi sustaining his old part of Scaramouch. He was received on his entrance with great applause, and it happened oddly enough that on that night there was little or no disturbance. This circumstance, which he naturally attributed in some degree to himself, pleased him amazingly, as indeed it did Kemble also, who, shaking him cordially by the hand when he came off, said, "Bravo, Joe! we have got them now; we 'll act this again to-morrow night." And so they did; but it appeared that they had not "got them" either, for the uproar recommenced with, if possible, greater fury than before, all the performers agreeing that until that moment they had never heard such a mighty and indescribable din.

Eventually, on the 15th of December, the famous O. P. row terminated, on the proprietors of the theatre lowering the charge of admission to the

pit, removing the obnoxious private boxes, rescinding Madame Catalani's engagement, discharging Mr. James Brandon, house and box bookkeeper, who had rendered himself greatly offensive to the O. P. people, abandoning all prosecutions against those who had been required to answer for their misconduct at the sessions, and offering a public apology. The ungracious task of making it, fell upon Mr. Kemble, who delivered what it was deemed necessary to say, with remarkable self-possession and dignity. It was received by the audience with great applause, and a placard was immediately hoisted in the pit, bearing the words, "We are satisfied;" it was speedily followed by a similar announcement in the boxes; and thus terminated the famous O. P. war, wholly unparalleled in dramatic or indeed in any other annals.

At Christmas, "Harlequin Pedlar, or the Haunted Well," was produced: it met with very great success, being played fifty-two nights. In March 1810 Grimaldi first appeared as Skirmish in "The Deserter of Naples;" and "Mother Goose" was again played. The theatre closed in July, and reopened in October. Nothing particularly new was done that season at Sadlers Wells; at

Christmas 1810, he appeared, as usual, in the Covent Garden pantomime, which was called "Harlequin Asmodeus, or Cupid on Crutches." It was acted for forty-six nights, and was played occasionally until May 1811.

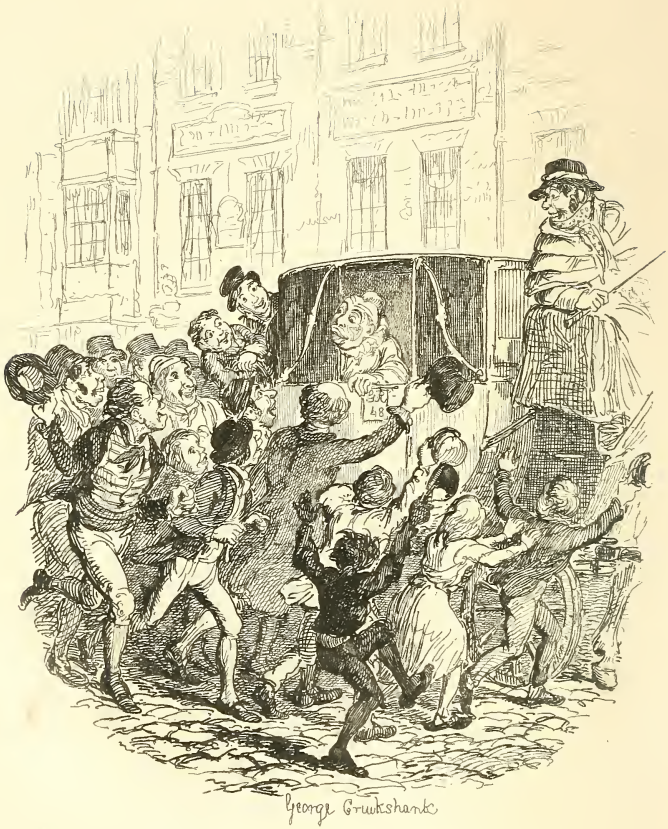
During this month he had to play Clown at both theatres, the pantomime being acted as the first piece at Sadlers Wells, and as the last piece at Covent Garden. Not having time to change his dress, and indeed having no reason for doing so, if he had, in consequence of his playing the same character at both houses he was accustomed to have a coach in waiting, into which he threw himself the moment he had finished at Sadlers Wells, and was straightway carried to Drury Lane to begin again.

One night it so happened that, by some forgetfulness or mistake on the part of the driver, the coach which usually came for him failed to make its appearance. It was a very wet night, and not having a moment to lose, he sent for another. After a considerable interval, during which he was in an agony of fear lest the Covent Garden stage should be kept waiting, the messenger returned in a breathless state with the information that there was not a coach to be got.

There was only one desperate alternative, and that was to run through the streets. Knowing that his appearance at Covent Garden must by this time be necessary, he made up his mind to do it, and started off at once.

The night being very dark, he got on pretty well at first; but when he came into the streets of Clerkenwell, where the lights in the shops showed him in his Clown's dress running along at full speed, people began to grow rather astonished. First, a few people turned round to look after him, and then a few more, and so on until there were a great many, and at last, one man who met him at a street corner, recognising the favourite, gave a loud shout of, "Here 's Joe Grimaldi!"

This was enough. Off set Grimaldi faster than ever, and on came the mob, shouting, huzzaing, screaming out his name, throwing up their caps and hats, and exhibiting every manifestation of delight. He ran into Holborn with several hundred people at his heels, and being lucky enough to find a coach there, jumped in. But this only increased the pressure of the crowd, who followed the vehicle with great speed and perseverance; when, suddenly poking his head out of the window, he gave one of his famous and well-known


George Cruikshank

laughs. Upon this the crowd raised many roars of laughter and applause, and hastily agreed, as with one accord, that they would see him safe and sound to Covent Garden. So, the coach went on surrounded by the dirtiest body-guard that was ever beheld, not one of whom deserted his post, until Grimaldi had been safely deposited at the stage-door; when, after raising a vociferous cheer, such of them as had money rushed round to the gallery-doors, and making their appearance in the front just as he came on the stage, set up a boisterous shout of "Here he is again!" and cheered him enthusiastically, to the infinite amusement of every person in the theatre who had got wind of the story.

In the season of 1811, "The Great Devil" was revived at Sadlers Wells: he played a part in it in which he was highly successful and applauded to the very echo. In July, he injured his chest severely, by falling upon a tight-rope, and was obliged for several weeks to give up all his theatrical engagements. He reappeared at Covent Garden in October following, playing in Asmodeus, Mother Goose, Valentine and Orson, and Raymond and Agnes; in the latter piece he supported, for the first time, the

part of Robert. On the 26th of December the new pantomime appeared; it was called "Harlequin and Padmanaba, or the Golden Fish," and went off very well.

One of his earlier appearances in the regular drama occurred in the following June (1812), when, for his own benefit, he played Acres in "The Rivals." The house was a very good one, and he cleared upwards of two hundred pounds by it.

This year was rendered remarkable to him by some temporary embarrassments into which he was plunged, partly, he says, by the great expense consequent upon keeping a country as well as a town house, and partly by the great extravagance of his wife, who, although an excellent woman, had, like everybody else, some fault:—hers was a love of dress which almost amounted to a mania. Finding that retrenchment must be the order of the day, he gave up his house at Finchley, discharged his groom, sold his horse and gig, and placed his affairs in the hands of Mr. Harmer, the solicitor, to whom circumstances had so oddly introduced him a few years before. Seven or eight months served to bring

affairs into the right train again; by the end of that time every one of his creditors had been paid to the last penny of their demands.

In 1812 there was nothing particularly worthy of notice at Sadlers Wells. His second benefit, which took place in October, was a great one, the receipts being two hundred and twenty-five pounds. It was supposed that the theatre would not hold more than two hundred pounds, but no benefit of his ever brought him less than two hundred and ten; and indeed one, which we shall presently have occasion to mention, produced nearly two hundred and seventy pounds; — whether those who contributed this sum were all in the theatre at one period or not, we cannot of course pretend to say.

In the latter end of this month, he entered into an engagement to perform for two nights with Mr. Watson, of the Cheltenham theatre, who arranged to give him a clear half of whatever the receipts might be. Previously to leaving town, he consulted with Mr. Hughes about this speculation, who told him that Cheltenham was a bad theatrical town, on account of its having many other amusements; but still he fancied he might

clear his expenses, and perhaps forty or fifty pounds besides. At the appointed time he left London, having received a species of half-notice from Mr. Harris that he would not be wanted at Covent Garden; and on the next night, played Scaramouch and sang Tippitywitchit with great *éclat* at Cheltenham. The following evening he played Clown in a little pantomime of his own concoction.

The house was full on each occasion, the performances gave perfect satisfaction, and he was induced by the manager to stay in that part of the country two days longer, and to go to Gloucester (nine miles off), at which place he likewise had a theatre. Thither they started early on the following morning, played the same pieces as at Cheltenham, and met with an equal degree of success.

After the performances were over, Mr. Watson and he supped together; and when the cloth was removed, he said,

"Now, Joe, I can only allow you to take one glass of punch, time is so very precious."

"I do not understand you," replied Grimaldi.

"Why, what I mean is, that it is now twelve o'clock, and time to go to bed," he answered.

"Oh, with all my heart," said Grimaldi. "But this is something new, I suspect, with you. Last night, I remember, it was three hours later than this before you suffered me to retire; and the night previous it was later even than that."

"Ay, ay," returned Watson; "but to-night we had perhaps better get to bed soon, as to-morrow I want you to go out rather early with me."

"What do you call rather early?" inquired Grimaldi.

"Why, let me see,—we must start before three," answered the manager.

"Indeed!" said Grimaldi; "then I shall wish you good-night at once;" and so saying, without any loss of time he went to his chamber. After they had stepped into a chaise next day, he found that their destination was Berkeley Castle, to which its host had sent them a special invitation, and that their morning's amusement was to consist of coursing.

He had the honour of an acquaintance with Colonel Berkeley (now Lord Segrave), at whose table he was occasionally in the habit of dining, and upon their arrival at the castle was most hospitably received. The castle was full of com-

pany. Several noblemen were there, as well as distinguished commoners: among the former was Lord Byron, whom he had frequently seen, and who always patronised his benefits at Covent Garden, but with whom he had never conversed. Colonel Berkeley introduced him to such of the company as he was unacquainted with, and, in common with the rest, to Lord Byron, who instantly advanced towards him, and, making several low bows, expressed in very hyperbolical terms his "great and unbounded satisfaction in becoming acquainted with a man of such rare and profound talents," &c. &c.

Perceiving that his lordship was disposed to be facetious at his expense, Grimaldi felt half inclined to reply in a similar strain; but, reflecting that he might give offence by doing so, abstained—resolving, however, not to go entirely unrevenged for the joke which he was evidently playing him. He returned all the bows and congees threefold, and, as soon as the ceremonious introduction was over, made a face at Colonel Berkeley, expressive of mingled gratification and suspicion, which threw those around into a roar of laughter, while Byron, who did not see it, looked round for the

cause of the merriment in a manner which redoubled it at once.

"Grimaldi," said the Colonel, "after breakfast, at which meal we expect your company and that of Mr. Watson, you shall have a course with the greyhounds yonder; then you must return and dine with us. We will have dinner early, so that you can reach the theatre in time to perform."

To this, he had no further reply to make, than to express his gratitude for such consideration and kindness. After they had taken a plentiful meal, they went out with the dogs and had some famous sport. Hares were so plentiful that they started twenty-seven in one field; and the day being fine and the novelty great, Grimaldi was highly delighted with the proceedings.

Upon their return to the castle, they found most of the party with whom they had breakfasted assembled together, and shortly afterwards they sat down to dinner. Lord Byron sat on Grimaldi's left, and a young nobleman whom he knew very well from his being constantly behind the scenes at Covent Garden, but whose name he could not recollect, on his right.

"Grimaldi," whispered this young nobleman

just as dinner commenced, "did you ever meet Byron before?"

"Never, my lord," answered Grimaldi: "that is, never to converse with him."

"Then, of course you have not met him at a dinner-party."

"Never, my lord."

"Well, then," continued the young gentleman, who, as anybody but Grimaldi would have seen, was playing on his simplicity in conjunction with Lord Byron, "I will tell you why I asked these questions: I was anxious, if you should chance not to know his lordship's peculiarities, to point out to you one trifling but still distinguishing one, to which if you happen to oppose yourself, he will infallibly take a dislike to you; and I need not assure you that it is always best for a public character to be on good terms rather than bad with such men."

Grimaldi bowed his thanks and really did feel very grateful.

"What I allude to, is simply this," added his noble friend: "Byron is very courteous at the dinner-table, but does not like to have his courtesy thrown away or slighted; I would recommend

you, if he asks you to take anything, as he is almost sure to do, no matter whether it be to eat or drink, not to refuse."

"I am very much obliged to you, my lord," was Grimaldi's reply: "in fact, I look upon your kindness as a great personal favour, and I shall carefully act upon your recommendation."

And so he did, and so indeed he had plenty of opportunities of doing; for Lord Byron asked him to partake of so many things, none of which he liked to decline, that at last he was quite gorged, and was almost fearful that if it lasted much longer, he should be unable to perform that night at Gloucester.

Towards the end of the repast his lordship invited him to eat a little apple-tart, which he thought he could manage, the more especially as he was very fond of it; he therefore acquiesced with many thanks, and the tart being placed before him, commenced operations. Byron looked at him for a moment, and then said, with much seeming surprise,

"Why, Mr. Grimaldi, do you not take soy with your tart?"

"Soy, my lord?"

"Yes, soy: it is very good with salmon, and therefore it must be nice with apple-pie."

Poor Grimaldi did not see the analogy, and was upon the point of saying so; but his friend on his right touched his elbow, when, recollecting what he had previously communicated, he bowed assent to Byron's proposal and proceeded to pour some of the fish-sauce over the tart. After one or two vain attempts to swallow a mouthful of the vile mess, he addressed Lord Byron with considerable formality, begging to observe that no one could do more justice than himself to his kindness, but that he really trusted he would forgive his declining to eat the mixture he had recommended, as, however much the confession might savour of bad taste, he really did not relish soy with apple-tart.

He was much relieved by Byron's taking the apology in very good part, and by the rest of the company laughing most heartily—at what, he says, he cannot possibly tell, *unless* it had been determined to put a joke upon him. We should imagine it had been, but in any case should be strongly disposed to say that a great deal more of

innate politeness was displayed on the side of simplicity than on that of nobility.

Shortly afterwards they took their leave and returned to Gloucester, where they found the theatre crowded as before. The performances went off as well as possible, and after all was over Watson presented him with one hundred and ninety-five pounds as his share.

At seven o'clock next morning he was on his road to London, where he arrived that night.

Early on the following morning, he waited upon his friend Mr. Hughes, and having reminded him that "Cheltenham was a very bad theatrical town, on account of its spas and other amusements, but that still it was possible forty or fifty pounds might be made there," triumphantly exhibited his one hundred and ninety-four pounds.

In the evening he called at Covent Garden, and saw Mr. H. Harris, who informed him that Mr. Diamond of the Bath and Bristol theatres wished to engage him for five weeks,—that his terms were twenty-five pounds per week, with half a clear benefit at each of the places named, and that if he liked to go he was at perfect liberty to do so,

the proprietors of Covent Garden not needing his services until Christmas. His salary was to be paid however, just as though he were performing.

Of this liberality he gladly availed himself, and, after expressing his gratitude, wrote to Diamond, accepting the proposal. A week after he had returned from Gloucester, he left town for Bath.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1812 to 1816.

A Clergyman's Dinner-party at Bath. — First Appearance of Grimaldi's Son, and Death of his old friend Mr. Hughes. — Grimaldi plays at three Theatres on one night, and has his Salary stopped for his pains. — His severe illness. — Second journey to Bath. — Davidge, "Billy Coombes," and the Chest. — Facetiousness of the aforesaid Billy.

Two days after his arrival in Bath he appeared at the theatre, where he was fortunate enough to elicit the warmest applause and approbation from a crowded audience; — nor was he less successful at Bristol, the theatre being completely filled every night he performed. He remained in this part of the country during five weeks, playing four nights in every week at Bath, and the remaining two at Bristol. By this trip he realized 287*l.* — 125*l.* for salary and 162*l.* for benefits; but although it was a lucrative expedition, it was by no means a pleasant one, the weather being exceedingly inclement, and he

being compelled to return to Bath every evening after the performances at Bristol were over. The nightly rides at that season of the year were by no means agreeable; he suffered very much from colds, and, upon the whole, was very far from sorry when his engagement terminated.

During his stay at Bath a little incident happened, developing, in a striking point of view, a very repulsive trait of discourtesy and bad breeding in a quarter where, least of any, such an exhibition might have been looked for.

Higman, the bass singer, who was then in great repute, and was afterwards the original Gabriel in Guy Mannering, but is since dead, was invited with Grimaldi to dine with a reverend gentleman of that city. They accepted the invitation, and upon their arrival found a pretty large party of gentlemen assembled, the clerical host of course presiding. The very instant the cloth was removed this gentleman commanded, rather than asked, Higman to sing a song. Not wishing to appear desirous of enhancing the merit of the song by frivolous objections, he at once consented, although he had scarcely swallowed his meal. It was deservedly very much

applauded and complimented, and the moment the applause had ceased, the reverend doctor turned to Grimaldi and in the same peremptory manner requested a song from him. He begged leave to decline for the present, urging what was indeed the truth, that he had scarcely swallowed his dinner. The observation made by the host in reply rather astonished him.

"What, Mr. Grimaldi!" he exclaimed hastily, "not sing, sir! Why, I asked you here, sir, to-day expressly to sing."

"Indeed, sir!" said Grimaldi, rising from the table: "then I heartily wish you had said so when you gave me the invitation; in which case you would have saved me the inconvenience of coming here to-day, and prevented my wishing you, as I now beg to do, a very unceremonious good-night." With these words he left the apartment, and very soon afterwards the house.

It may appear to a great many persons a remarkable circumstance that a pantomime Clown should have been called upon to read a lesson of politeness and common decency to a reverend divine. The circumstance, however, happened literally as it is here narrated. A somewhat

similar story has been told of another well-known actor; but this rudeness, whether it arose in ignorance or intention, was offered to Grimaldi by the reverend gentleman in question, whose name he well remembered, but which we abstain from mentioning.

The Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden was entitled "Harlequin and the Red Dwarf, or the Adamant Rock:" it was entirely successful. On Easter Monday 1813, the melo-drama of "Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp," written by Mr. Farley, was acted for the first time, Grimaldi playing the character of Kasrac, a dumb slave, which became one of his most popular characters. The Sadlers Wells season merits no further notice than that, as usual, it was very profitable, and that Grimaldi produced a dance called "Fun and Physic," which was performed every night.

Covent Garden reopened in September, and this year he was in constant requisition before Christmas, as well as after, Aladdin being found an extremely profitable piece. "Harlequin and the Swans, or the Bath of Beauty," was produced at

Christmas, and followed at Easter by Sadak and Kalasrade, in which Grimaldi played Hassan.

Having now none of those amusements which in former years had served to employ his idle hours—having lost his flies, given up his pigeons, removed from Finchley, sold his house, and resigned his garden, he devoted the whole of his leisure time to the society and improvement of his son. As he could not bear to part with him, and was wholly unable to make up his mind to send him to any great boarding-school, he was partly educated at the same school at which his father had been a pupil, and partly by masters who attended him at home. The father appears to have bestowed great and praiseworthy care upon his education. Although at this time he was only twelve years old, he had not only quite mastered the common rudiments of learning, but had become well acquainted with French literature, and wrote the language with ease and propriety. He had at a very early age manifested a great fondness for music, especially the violin, and had acquired great proficiency on that instru-

ment under the tuition of one of the first masters in the country.

As he was a very clever boy, was an excellent dancer, and displayed a great fondness and aptitude for the stage, his father, finding that his inclinations lay irrevocably that way, determined to encourage them, and accordingly proceeded to instruct him in melodrama and pantomime. He fancied that in his old age, when his own heyday of fame and profit was over, he should gather new life from the boy's success, and that old times would be called up vividly before him when he witnessed his popularity in characters which had first brought his father before the public, and enabled him gradually, after the loss of his property, to acquire an independent and respectable station in society. The wish was a natural one, and the old man cherished it dearly for many years. It was decreed otherwise; and although in his better days the blight of this hope caused him great grief and misery, he endeavoured to bear it with humility and resignation.

On the 26th of April he resumed his labours at Sadlers Wells. He acted in a drama called the "Slave Pirate," which was successful. His

first benefit brought him 216*l.*, and his second 263*l.* 10*s.*; the last-named, being the best he had ever had at that house.

The great attraction of this benefit of 1814 was the first appearance on any stage of his son, who performed Friday in "Robinson Crusoe," Grimaldi playing the latter part himself, and thus introducing his son to the public in the same piece in which his father had brought him forward thirty-three years before. For six weeks previous to the *débût*, the pains he had taken to render him master of the character and the drillings he gave him were innumerable, although they rather arose from the nervousness of the father than from any lack of intelligence on the part of the son, who not only rapidly acquired the instructions communicated to him, but in many instances improved upon them considerably. His intended appearance was kept a profound secret until within a week of the night on which he was to perform; and when the announcement was at length made, the demand for tickets and places was immense. The result was, that the benefit not only turned out (as has been already mentioned) the best Grimaldi ever had, but the re-

ception of the son was enthusiastic, and his exertions were both applauded by the public and commended in the newspapers. It may appear a mere matter of course to say that the father considered the performance the best that he had ever seen; but long afterwards, when the boy was dead, and censure or praise was alike powerless to assist or harm him, Grimaldi expressed, in the same strong terms, his high opinion of his abilities, and his conviction that had he been only moderate and temperate in the commonest degree, he must in a few years have equalled, if not greatly excelled, anything which he himself had achieved in his very best days.

On the 20th of December following, he sustained a severe loss in the death of his constant and sincere friend Mr. Richard Hughes, who had been his well-wisher and adviser from infancy, and whose relationship to his first wife gave him a strong and lasting claim on his regard. As another instance of the severe mental trials which an actor has to undergo, it may be mentioned that during the time his friend was lying dead, he was engaged for many hours each day in rehearsing broadly humorous pantomime, and that

as if to render the contrast more striking, the burial being fixed for the 26th of the month, he was compelled to rehearse part of his Clown's character on the stage, to run to the funeral, to get back from the churchyard to the theatre to finish the rehearsal, and to exert all his comic powers at night to set the audience in a roar.

This pantomime was founded upon the story of Whittington and his Cat, and had a very extended run. On the night of its production his spirits were so affected by the calamity he had sustained, that it was with great difficulty he could go through his part, in which he had very nearly failed. He succeeded by a strong effort in finishing the piece ; and although his health paid very dearly for this and other efforts of the same nature, the constant bustle and excitement of his professional duties aided in recovering him and enabling him to act with his accustomed vivacity.

The harlequinade of " The Talking Bird" was produced at Sadlers Wells this season, in which he first enacted the Bird and afterwards the Clown. During the run of this pantomime he performed the remarkable feat of playing three very heavy

parts, (two of them Clowns,) at three different theatres on the same night. He was intimately acquainted with a Mr. Hayward, who being married to a clever actress at the Surrey, one Miss Dely, begged him as a great favour to act for her at that theatre on her benefit night. He asked and obtained permission from the proprietor of Sadlers Wells, but could not do the same at Covent Garden, as Mr. Harris was absent from town. He did not think it a point of any great importance, however, inasmuch as he had not been called upon to act for some time, and nothing was then announced in which it was at all likely he would be wanted. Unfortunately on the very night of the benefit, " La Perouse," in which he acted, was advertised at Covent Garden. In this dilemma, he hurried over the water, explained the circumstance, and pointed out the impossibility of his performing at the Surrey.

But the Surrey people who had advertised him stoutly contending that there was no impossibility in the case, assured him that all would be right; that he should play there first, then go to Sadlers Wells, and then to Covent Garden to finish the

evening. To the end that he should be in good time at each house, it was proposed that a chaise, with the best horses that could be procured, should be provided, and held in readiness to carry him at the greatest possible speed from place to place.

Not having the heart to disappoint the parties interested, he consented to this arrangement. At the Surrey, he played with Bologna in the pantomime: the moment it was over, he jumped into a chaise and four that was waiting at the door, and started for Sadlers Wells. Bologna accompanied him to see the issue of the proceeding, and, by dashing through the streets at a most extraordinary pace, they reached Sadlers Wells just at the were commencement of the overture for the pantomime. Hurrying to repaint his face, (which had been very much bedaubed by the rain, which poured upon it as he looked out of the chaise-window entreating the post-boys to drive a little slower,) and thrusting himself into the dress of the "Talking Bird," he was ready at the instant when the call-boy told him he was wanted. There still remained Covent Garden, and towards the

close of the pantomime he grew very anxious, looking constantly towards the sides of the stage to see if Bologna were still there; for, as he was the Perouse of the night and was wanted a full half-hour before him, he felt something like security so long as he remained. At length the pantomime was over, and once more taking their seats in the same chaise, they drove at the same furious pace to Covent Garden, and were ready dressed and in the green-room before the first bars of the overture had been played. This change of dress assisted greatly in recovering him from his fatigue, and he went through the third part as well as the first, feeling no greater exhaustion at the close of the performances than was usual with him on an ordinary night. The only refreshment which he took during the whole evening was one glass of warm ale and a biscuit. He plumed himself very much on this feat; for although he had played Clown at two theatres for twenty-eight nights successively, he considered it something out of the common way, and triumphed in it greatly.

He had a specimen next day of the spirit which

Fawcett still cherished towards him, and which, but for the kindness of Mr. Harris, might have injured him severely on many occasions. Applying, as usual, at the treasury for his weekly salary of ten pounds, he was informed by the treasurer, with great politeness and apparent regret, that he had received orders from Mr. Fawcett to stop it for that week. He instantly posted off in search of that gentleman, and upon finding him requested to know why his salary was not to be paid.

"Because, sir," replied Mr. Fawcett,—"because you have thought fit to play at the Surrey Theatre without mentioning the matter to *us*, or asking *our* permission."

Grimaldi whistled a little to express his total unconcern, and, turning away, muttered, "For *us* and for *our* tragedy, thus stooping to your clemency, we beg your hearing patiently." In crossing the stage to the door, he met Mr. Harris, who had that instant entered the theatre, having arrived in town not ten minutes before. He shook him kindly by the hand, and inquired how he was.

"Why, sir," said Grimaldi, "I am as well as can be expected, considering that my salary has been stopped."

"Why, what have you been about, Joe?"

"Played for Mrs. Hayward's benefit at the Surrey, sir."

"Oh! without leave, I suppose?"

"Why, sir," answered Grimaldi, "there was no one in the theatre who was, in my opinion, entitled actually to give or refuse leave: you were out of town; with Mr. Fawcett I have nothing to do — he has neither connexion with nor influence over my line of business, nor do I wish him to have any; Mr. Farley is the only gentleman under yourself whom I consider myself obliged to acknowledge as a superior here—and to him I did name it, and he told me to go, for I should not be wanted."

"Joe," said Mr. Harris after a moment's pause, "go to Brandon, and tell him to give you your money. And, mind, I 've entered into an arrangement for you to go and see Diamond again in October, upon the same terms as before: so mind you go, and I 'll take care you are neither fined nor wanted."

For this double liberality he expressed his best thanks, and returning to the treasury with the manager's message, received his salary and departed.

On the 15th of the next month his first benefit for that season took place at Sadlers Wells. He sustained the part of Don Juan; and his son, J. S. Grimaldi, played Scaramouch, being his second appearance. He acted the part capitally, and had a great reception, so that his father now in good earnest began to hope he would not only support the name of Grimaldi, but confer upon it increased popularity. The receipts of this night were 231*l.* 14*s.* Three months afterwards his second benefit occurred: Monday the 9th of October was the day fixed for it, but on the preceding Saturday he was suddenly seized with severe illness, originating in a most distressing impediment in his breathing. Medical assistance was immediately called in, and he was bled until nigh fainting. This slightly relieved him; but shortly afterwards he had a relapse, and four weeks passed before he recovered sufficiently to leave the house. There is no doubt but that some radical change had occurred in his constitution,

for previously to this attack he had never been visited with a single day's illness, while after its occurrence he never had a single day of perfect health.

On the Monday, finding it would be impossible for him to play, he procured a substitute, and immediately had bills printed and posted outside the theatre. His absence made a difference of about fifty pounds in the receipts ; but as his son played Scaramouch, and played it well, he sustained no greater pecuniary loss, and had the satisfaction of hearing from all quarters that his son was rapidly improving.

After the lapse of a month Grimaldi became tolerably well, and as it was now time for him to keep his engagement with Diamond, he went to Bath in November, and remained there until the middle of December, occasionally acting at Bristol. The profits of this trip were two hundred and ninety-four pounds.

It was either during this provincial trip, or about this time, that he first became acquainted with Mr. Davidge, the lessee of the Surrey Theatre. He was then the Harlequin at Bath and Bristol,

and although he has since become a round and magisterial figure, was then a very light and active pantomimist.

In the pantomimes Davidge was the Harlequin, and Grimaldi of course the Clown. They were accustomed to call the Pantaloon, who was a very indifferent actor, by the name of "Billy Coombes," —why, they best knew, but it seems not to have been his real name. This worthy had given both Davidge and Grimaldi mighty offence upon several occasions, possibly by making his appearance on the stage in a state of intoxication. Grimaldi forgot the precise cause of affront, but, whatever it was, they deemed it a very great one, and Davidge upon several occasions took opportunities of hinting, in speeches fraught with determination and replete with a peculiar variety of expletives, "that he was resolved some time or other to be revenged upon that Billy Coombes."

One evening, while the pantomime was in progress and the two friends were exciting much mirth and applause, Davidge pointed to a chest which was used in the piece, and, whispering that there was a lock upon it with a key, remarked

that Billy had to get into it directly, and asked whether it would not be a good joke to turn the key upon him. Grimaldi readily concurred, and no sooner was the unconscious Mr. Coombes beneath the lid of the chest, than he was locked in, amidst the plaudits of the audience, who thought it a capital trick. There were but two more scenes in the pantomime, which Davidge had to commence. Just as he was going on the stage, Grimaldi inquired whether he had let out the Pantaloon.

"No," he replied hastily, "I have not, but I will, directly I come off." So saying, he danced upon the stage, followed by Grimaldi, and the usual buffeting ensued with the accustomed effect. The pantomime was over a few minutes afterwards, and Grimaldi, who felt very tired when he had gone through his part, in consequence of his recent illness, went straight home, and was in bed a very short time after the curtain fell.

There was a call the next morning for the rehearsal of a few new pantomime scenes which Grimaldi had prepared to vary the entertainments. As the Pantaloon was not forthcoming,

however, they could not be gone through with any useful effect. When Davidge arrived, Grimaldi mentioned the circumstance.

"I suppose," he said, "our victim has taken our conduct in high dudgeon, and doesn't mean to come this morning. We shall be in a pretty mess at night if he does not!"

"What do you mean?" said Davidge with a look of surprise.

"This Billy Coombes, he is not come to the theatre to-day, and is not to be found at his lodgings, for we have sent a man there."

"By G—," said Davidge, "I never let him out of the box!"

On reflection, they had certainly finished the pantomime without him, although it did not strike them at the time, because, as he was no great actor, the business of the last two scenes had been arranged entirely between Davidge and Grimaldi. They lost no time in inquiring after the chest, and it was at length discovered in a cellar below the stage. On raising the lid, the Pantaloon was discovered, and a truly pitiable object he looked, although they were both not a

little relieved to find he was alive, for, not knowing that the chest was perforated in various places, they had entertained some serious fears that when he did turn up, he might be found suffocated. Every necessary assistance was afforded him, and he never suffered in the slightest degree from his temporary confinement. He said that he had shouted as loud as he could, and had knocked and kicked against the sides of his prison, but that nobody had taken the least notice of him, which he attributed to the incessant noise and bustle behind the scenes. With the view of keeping the stage as clear as possible, everything used in a pantomime is put away at once; the chest was lowered by a trap into the cellar, notwithstanding the shouts of the Pantaloon, who, knowing that he would be released next day, went to sleep very quietly.

This was the version of the story given by the ingenious Mr. Coombes, and in this version Grimaldi was an implicit believer. We are rather disposed to think that Mr. Coombes might have thrown an additional light upon the matter by explaining that he had got into the chest that

morning to turn the tables upon his assailants, the more so, as he received various little presents in the way of compensation for his imprisonment, with which he expressed himself perfectly satisfied.

This "Billy Coombes," or whatever the man's name may have been, once said a very ludicrous thing upon the stage which convulsed the audience with laughter. The play was Romeo and Juliet, and he was cast to perform Sampson. The wardrobe of the theatre being very scanty, he was habited in a most absurd and ridiculous dress, every article of which had evidently formed a portion of a different suit, and which was moreover full three sizes too large for him, especially the coat, the cuffs of which, instead of ornamenting his wrists, dangled over his fingers' ends. In this disguise, "Billy," who waxed extremely wroth at the figure he cut, presented himself to the audience, and was of course received with a loud laugh.

Now, in the first scene of the play, Sampson, according to the stage-direction, has to bite his thumb at Abram, a servitor of the rival house, upon which the following dialogue ensues:

" *Abram.* Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

" *Samp. (aside.)* Is the law on our side if I say ay?

" *Gregory.* No.

" *Samp.* No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite my thumb, sir."

Billy Coombes very coolly omitted biting his thumb at all; but the actor who played Abram, desirous to carry on the business of the scene, thought it best to take it for granted that the stage-direction had been complied with, and turning indignantly round, said,

" Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"

" No sir," replied Billy Coombes in a clear and loud voice, " I would, sir, with pleasure, only my master puts me into such a queer coat, sir," holding up one of the long sleeves, " that I can't get at my fist for the life of me."

The audience roared, the actors laughed, and for some minutes the stage-business was at a complete stand-still; Billy meanwhile making many apparently sincere and laboured attempts to uncover his hand, in which at last he thought proper to succeed, and giving the right cue, the play went on.

When Grimaldi returned to town, the rehearsals of " Harlequin and the Sylph of the Oak, or the

Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green," commenced at Covent Garden. It was produced with great success at the usual time, and was followed, in April 1816, by Pocock's melodrama of "Robinson Crusoe, or the Bold Buccaneer," in which Grimaldi played Friday, and Farley acted Crusoe. This was the most successful adaptation of De Foe's great story; it was played for a great many nights, and is still occasionally performed

CHAPTER XIX.

1816 to 1817.

He quits Sadlers Wells in consequence of a disagreement with the Proprietors.—Lord Byron.—Retirement of John Kemble.—Immense Success of Grimaldi in the Provinces, and his great Gains.—A scene in a Barber's Shop.

At Sadlers Wells the principal novelty of the season of 1816 was a very successful melodrama called "Philip and his Dog." During a period of thirty-eight years, that is to say, from 1782 to 1820 inclusive, Grimaldi was never absent from Sadlers Wells except for one season. The cause of his non-engagement in 1817 was this:—His former articles expiring a few days before the close of the previous season, he received a note from Mr. Charles Dibdin requesting to know upon what terms he would be disposed to renew them. He replied, that they had only to make

the pounds guineas, and he would be content. There was no objection to this proposition, but he was informed that the proprietors had arrived at the resolution of no longer allowing him two benefits in each year, and of permitting him in future to take only one. He considered this a very arbitrary and unjust proceeding. As he had never under any circumstances cleared less than 150*l.* from a benefit, this reduction necessarily involved the diminution of his yearly income by a large sum; and as he paid 60*l.* for the house on every such occasion, which was probably more than it would otherwise have had in it, he did not think that the proprietors could urge any just reason for proposing the alteration. After considering these points, he wrote to Mr. Charles Dibdin, at that time a proprietor himself, that he could on no consideration give up either of his accustomed benefits. To this note he received no reply, but he confidently expected that they would not attempt a season without him, he being at that time unquestionably the lion of the theatre, and certainly drawing money to the house. He was, however, deceived, for he heard

no more from Mr. Charles Dibdin, and eventually learned that Paulo was engaged in his place.

In the November of this year he made a little excursion of four days to Brighton, the theatre of which town belonged to Mr. John Brunton, who was likewise an actor, and a very good one too, at Covent Garden. This gentleman was the father of one of our best modern actresses—Mrs. Yates, whose talents are so well and so deservedly appreciated. He was always a kind friend to Grimaldi, and had no cause to accuse him of ingratitude.

At Brighton they played Valentine and Orson, Robinson Crusoe, &c., in which Brunton, who was well acquainted with pantomime and melodrama, acted Farley's parts, while Grimaldi, of course, sustained his original characters. They were very successful indeed, Grimaldi receiving 100*l.* for his remuneration, with which, as will be readily supposed, he was perfectly well satisfied.

At this time he repeatedly met with Lord Byron, not only at Covent Garden, but at various private parties to which he was invited; and eventually they became very good friends. Lord Byron was, as all the world knows, an eccentric

man, and he loses nothing of the character in Grimaldi's hands.

" Sometimes," he says, " his lordship appeared lost in deep melancholy, and when that was the case, really looked the picture of despair, for his face was highly capable of expressing profound grief; at other times he was very lively, chatting with great spirit and vivacity; and then occasionally he would be a complete fop, exhibiting his white hands and teeth with an almost ludicrous degree of affectation. But whether " grave or gay, lively or severe," his bitter, biting sarcasm never was omitted or forgotten.

It never fell to Grimaldi's lot to hear any person say such severe things as Byron accustomed himself to utter, and they tended not a little to increase the awe with which, upon their first interview, he had been predisposed to regard him. As to Grimaldi himself, Byron invariably acted towards him with much condescension and good humour, frequently conversing with him for hours together; and when the business of the evening called him away, he would wait at the " wings" for him, and as soon as he came off the stage, recommence

the conversation where it had been broken off. Grimaldi rarely contradicted him, fearing to draw down upon himself the sarcasms which he constantly heard fulminated against others; and when they spoke on subjects with Byron's opinions upon which he was unacquainted, he cautiously endeavoured to ascertain them before he ventured to give his own, fearing, as he felt so very warmly upon most questions, that he might chance to dissent from him upon one in which he took great interest.

Before Lord Byron left England upon the expedition whence he was destined to return no more, he presented Grimaldi, as a token, he said, of his regard, with a valuable silver snuff-box, around which was the inscription, "The gift of Lord Byron to Joseph Grimaldi." It was of course preserved with the most scrupulous care, and valued more highly than any article in his possession. It is but an act of justice to both parties to say, that Lord Byron always treated him with the greatest liberality. In 1808, when he saw him act for the first time, he sent a message to his residence, requesting that he would always

forward to him one box-ticket whenever he took a benefit. This he regularly did, and in return invariably received on the following day a five-pound note.

"Harlequin Gulliver, or the Flying Island," which was the pantomime of the year at Covent Garden, was so successful as to be played sixty-three nights before Easter. On the 30th of March, a piece under the title of "The Marquis de Carabbas, or Puss in Boots," was produced, and utterly failed. It was a very poor affair, was only played one night, and appears to have fully deserved its fate.

On the same night Sadlers Wells commenced its season, upon which occasion the unexpected absence of Grimaldi occasioned quite a commotion among the audience. He had said nothing about it himself, nor was the circumstance known to the public until the bills were put forth, when the announcement of Paulo's engagement and Grimaldi's secession occasioned much surprise and some manifestation of feeling. Grimaldi had been spending a few days at Egham, and upon his return to town, towards the latter end of

March, was not a little amazed to see the walls in the neighbourhood of his house in Spa Fields completely covered with placards emanating from the rival parties, some bearing the words "Joey for ever!" others displaying "No Paulo!" and others again "No Grimaldi!" It was supposed by some that Grimaldi himself had a hand in the distribution of these bills; but he solemnly denies it, declaring that he never saw or heard anything of them until they were paraded upon the walls on his return to town.

The theatre opened with "Philip and his Dog," and a new harlequinade called "April Fools, or Months and Mummery." Being informed that it was Dibdin's intention, if any disturbance occurred in consequence of his absence, to address the house and state that it had resulted from Grimaldi's express wish, he went to the boxes on the opening night, determined, if any such statement were made, to address the audience from his place, and explain the circumstances under which he had left the theatre. He was spared this very disagreeable task, however, no other expression of public feeling taking place except that which is of all

others most sensibly and acutely felt by a manager;—the people stayed away. Instead of every seat being taken, and standing-places eagerly secured, as had formerly been the case, the theatre was not a quarter filled. There were only forty persons, and these principally friends of the proprietors, in the boxes; not more than a hundred in the pit, and the gallery was not half full. Grimaldi stayed only the first act of the first piece, and then, seeing no probability of being called for, walked away to Covent Garden, to dress for "Puss in Boots," the untimely fate of which has been already recorded.

The next morning, the newspapers, one and all, made known Grimaldi's absence from Sadlers Wells, and regretted it as a circumstance which could not fail to prove very injurious to the interests of the theatre. They did this without decrying the merits of Paulo, who was really a very good Clown, but who laboured under the double disadvantage of not being known at Sadlers Wells, and of following in the wake of one who had been a great favourite there for so many years.

Grimaldi's non-engagement at Sadlers Wells was

no sooner made known than the provincial managers vied with each other in their endeavours to secure him. Mr. W. Murray, the manager of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Theatres, offered him an engagement at each for six nights when Covent Garden closed, which he immediately accepted. The terms were these: — Grimaldi was to have the best night's receipts out of each six, Murray the second best, and the other four to be equally divided between them deducting forty pounds for expenses. He had no sooner closed with this proprietor than he was waited upon by Mr. Knight of the Manchester and Liverpool Theatres, who offered him an engagement for three weeks, into which he also entered. There then followed such a long list of offers, that if he had had twelve months at his disposal instead of six weeks, they would have occupied the whole time. Many of these offers were of the most handsome and liberal nature; and it was with great regret that he was compelled to decline them.

As there was nothing for Grimaldi to do at Covent Garden in consequence of the early decease of "Puss in Boots," he accepted an overture from

Mr. Brunton, who was the lessee of the Birmingham Theatre, for himself and his son, to act there for seven nights. It was the son's first provincial excursion, and the profits were somewhere about two hundred pounds. He took Worcester in his way on his return, and agreed, at the pressing request of Mr. Crisp, the manager, to stop and play there one night. He offered forty pounds down, or a fair division of the receipts. Grimaldi chose the former terms, acted Scaramouch to a very crowded house, sang several songs, and finished with a little pantomime in which he and his son were Clowns. He supped with the manager, who at the conclusion of the meal presented him with a fifty-pound note, saying, if he would accept that sum in lieu of the one agreed upon, it was heartily at his service, and he (the manager) would still be a great gainer by the transaction. This liberal treatment gave him a very favourable impression of the Worcester manager, whom he assured that should he ever be in that part of the country again, he would not fail to communicate with him. The next day, father and son both returned to town,

when the former had the satisfaction of hearing that he had not been wanted at Covent Garden. He found several letters from provincial managers offering great terms; but as he was obliged to be in London at the opening of Covent Garden, and the theatres to which they related did not lie anywhere in his route from Edinburgh to Liverpool, he had no option but to decline these proposals.

On the 23rd of June in this year John Kemble took his final leave of the stage, the entertainments being "Coriolanus" and "The Portrait of Cervantes." At the conclusion of the play, in which he had sustained the chief part with all his wonted dignity and grace, Kemble spoke a brief address, in which he took his farewell of the public, whom he had so long delighted. A white satin scarf with a wreath was thrown from the boxes, which falling short, lighted in the orchestra; upon which M. Talma, the French tragedian, who was sitting there, instantly rose from his seat and placed it on the stage, amidst thunders of applause.

He appeared but seldom during the remainder

of the season at Covent Garden, which closed on the 2nd of July. On the following day he left London for Scotland. When he reached Edinburgh, he was a little surprised to hear from Mr. Murray, that in consequence of Emery being engaged to play at Glasgow, he should be obliged to limit his (Grimaldi's) nights there to three instead of six, as agreed upon. This very much surprised him; but as there was no help for it, he acquiesced with a good grace, and left Edinburgh immediately for Glasgow, where he was to act on the following night. It chanced that it was Sunday, a day on which the common stage-coaches do not run in Scotland, and he therefore took a post-chaise, which was eleven hours and a half performing the distance, or about double the time in which he could have walked it with ease.

"Whittington," "Don Juan," "Valentine and Orson," and "The Rivals," were the pieces acted at Glasgow. In the first three his son performed with him; in the latter he played Acres, and was very well received. He played this part throughout his provincial trips, and always to the perfect

satisfaction and amusement of the audience. He never played Richard the Third in the provinces, as has been represented, but limited his performance of characters out of pantomime or melodrama, to Acres, Moll Flaggon, and one other part.

When Grimaldi had finished at Glasgow, he joined the company at Edinburgh, where he played Acres twice. The song of Tippitywitchit took amazingly with the gude folks of Auld Reekie, and both he and his son were received with great kindness and favour.

On the day after the completion of the engagement, Mr. Murray called at Grimaldi's lodgings, and wrote him a cheque for 417*l.* as his share, concluding by inviting him to pay him a similar visit during the following summer. The next morning he went to the bank to get his cheque cashed, when he was told that he could only receive Edinburgh notes, which were not payable out of Scotland, unless he consented to pay five per cent. for the accommodation. He was very loath to accept the one or pay the other; which the banker perceiving, told him that he happened to have a Bank-stock English note,

payable forty days after sight, for 400*l.*, which he could let him have. Not being short of cash, he accepted this, and received the 17*l.* balance in Scotch notes.

On the 22nd Grimaldi left Edinburgh for Berwick, where he had promised to play for two nights, and where he came out the following evening. He was greatly amazed when he saw the theatre at this town: it was situate up a stable-yard, in a loft, to reach which it was necessary to climb two flights of stairs, the whole entrance being mean and dirty, and, to ladies especially, particularly disagreeable. But his surprise was far from being confined to the exterior of the theatre: on the contrary, when he surveyed its interior, and found it neat and complete, perfect in its appointments, and even stylish in its decorations, his amazement was increased. It was still further augmented by the appearance and manner of the audience to which he played in the evening, for he had never by any chance acted (taking the size of the building into consideration) to a more fashionable and brilliant box-company.

The second night was as good as the first, and he received for his exertions 92*l.* 7*s.* On this

evening he supped with the manager, and during their meal the servant brought in a letter directed to Grimaldi, which had just been left at the door by a footman in livery, who, after delivering it, had immediately walked away. He broke the seal, and read as follows:

"Sir,—Accept the inclosed as a reward of your merit and the entertainment we have received from you this evening.

"A Friend."

"Thursday, July 24th, 1817."

The "inclosed" alluded to by the writer was a bank-note for 50*l.*!

Next day Grimaldi bade adieu to Berwick, and went direct to Liverpool, where he made his first appearance on the 30th; and here, according to previous arrangement, he remained three weeks. His salary was to be 12*l.* per week, with half a clear benefit, or the whole house for 40*l.*, which he chose.

As the night fixed upon for his benefit (which was the last of his engagement) drew nigh, he be-

gan anxiously to deliberate whether he should speculate in the "whole house" or not. He had no friends or acquaintances in Liverpool to assist him, but, on the other hand, he had made a tremendous hit; so, not being able to decide himself, he called in the aid of his friends Emery, Blanchard, and Jack Johnstone, who chanced to be there at the time, and requested their advice how he should proceed. With one accord they advised him to venture upon taking the house, which he, adopting their advice, forthwith did, paying down his 40*l.*, however, with many doubts as to the result. He lost no time in making out his bill and getting it printed. The play was "The Rivals," in which he acted Acres, and the afterpiece the pantomime of "Harlequin's Olio," in which his son was to appear as Flipflap, a kind of attendant upon Harlequin, and he as the Clown.

Several days elapsed, but nothing betokening a good benefit presented itself, and Grimaldi began to suspect it would turn out a complete failure. On the morning of the very day he had sold only fourteen tickets, and walked to the theatre

with rather downcast spirits. At the box-door he met Mr. Banks, one of the managers, who addressed him with,

"Well, Joe, a precious benefit you will have!"

"So I expect," he answered with a sigh.

Have you looked at the box-book?" inquired the manager with a slight degree of surprise in his manner.

"No," said Grimaldi; "I really am afraid to do so."

"Afraid!" echoed the manager; "upon my word, Mr. Grimaldi, I don't know what you would have, or what you are afraid of. Every seat in the boxes is taken; and if there had been more, they would have been let."

Hastening to the box-office, Grimaldi found that this good news was perfectly correct. His benefit, which took place on the 20th August, produced the greatest receipts ever known in that theatre: the sum taken was 328*l.* 14*s.*, being 1*l.* more than was received at Miss O'Neil's benefit (who was a wonderful favourite in the town), and beating John Emery's by 5*l.* He cleared upwards of 280*l.* by following the advice of his friends; upon

the strength of which, they all dined together next day and made very merry.

Many offers from other theatres came pouring in, but Grimaldi only accepted two; one to act at Preston, and the other to play four nights at Hereford for Mr. Crisp, for whom he naturally entertained very friendly feelings, remembering the courteous and handsome manner in which he had treated him at Worcester.

Two days after his great benefit Grimaldi travelled over to Preston, to fulfil his engagement with Mr. Howard, the manager, but was very much dispirited by the number of Quakers whom he saw walking about the streets, and whose presence in such numbers caused him to entertain great doubts of the success of this trip. The manager, however, was more sanguine, and, as it afterwards appeared, with good reason. He played Acres and Scaramouch to full houses, the receipts on the first night being 84*l.*, and on the second 87*l.* 16*s.* His share of the joint receipts was 86*l.*, with which sum, as it far exceeded his expectations, he was well contented.

On the second day after Grimaldi arrival in Pres-

ton, a little circumstance occurred which amused him so much, that he intended to have introduced it in one of his pantomime scenes, although he never did so. He was walking along the street by the market-place, when, observing a barber's pole projecting over the pavement, and recollecting that he wanted shaving, he opened the shop-door from above which hung the pole, and looking into the shop, saw a pretty little girl, about sixteen years of age, who was sitting at needlework. She rose to receive him, and he inquired if the master was within.

"No, sir," said the girl; "but I expect him directly."

"Very good," replied Grimaldi: "I want to look about me a little; I'll call again."

After strolling through the market-place a little while, he called again, but the barber had not come home.

Grimaldi was walking down the street after this second unsuccessful call, when he encountered Mr. Howard the manager, with whom he fell into conversation, and they walked up and down the street talking together. As he was going to the theatre and wished Grimaldi to accompany him,

they turned in that direction, and passing the barber's shop, again looked in. The girl was still sitting at work; but she laid it aside when the visitors entered, and said she really was very sorry, but her father had not come in yet.

"That's very provoking," said Grimaldi, "considering that I have called here three times already."

The girl agreed that it was, and stepping to the door, looked anxiously up the street and down the street, but there was no barber in sight.

"Do you want to see him on any particular business?" inquired Howard.

"Bless my heart! no, not I," said Grimaldi: "I only want to be shaved."

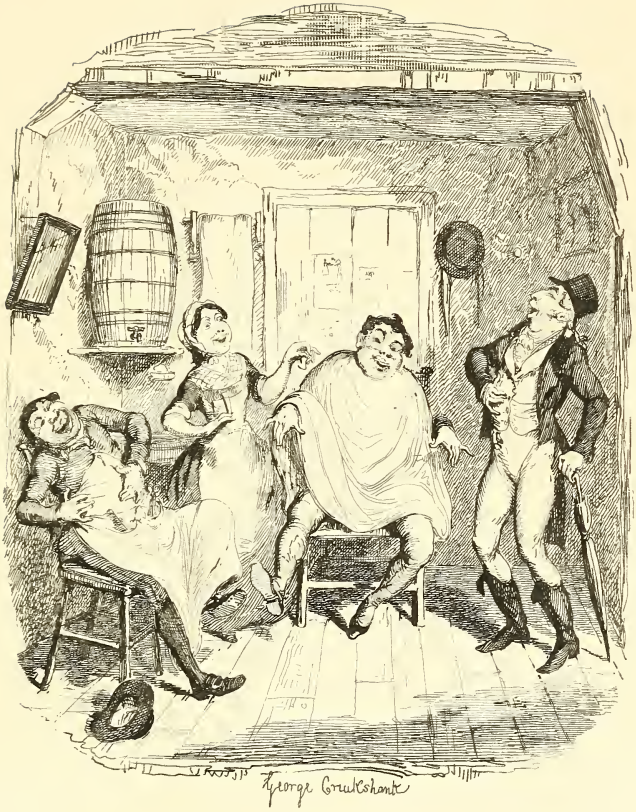
"Shaved, sir!" cried the girl. "Oh, dear me! what a pity it is you did not say so before! for I do most of the shaving for father when he's at home, and all when he's out."

"To be sure she does," said Howard: "I have been shaved by her fifty times."

"You have!" said Grimaldi. "Oh, I'm sure I have no objection. I am quite ready, my dear."

Grimaldi sat himself down in a chair, and the girl commenced the task in a very business-like

manner, Grimaldi feeling an irresistible tendency to laugh at the oddity of the operation, but smothering it by dint of great efforts while the girl was shaving his chin. At length, when she got to his upper lip, and took his nose between her fingers with a piece of brown paper, he could stand it no longer, but burst into a tremendous roar of laughter, and made a face at Howard which the girl no sooner saw than she dropped the razor and laughed immoderately also; whereat Howard began to laugh too, which only set Grimaldi laughing more; when just at this moment in came the barber, who seeing three people in convulsions of mirth, one of them with a soapy face and a gigantic mouth making the most extravagant faces over a white towel, threw himself into a chair without ceremony, and dashing his hat on the ground, laughed louder than any of them, declaring in broken words as he could find breath to utter them, that "that gentleman as was being shaved was out of sight the funniest gentleman he had ever seen," and entreating him "to stop them faces, or he knew he should die." When they were all perfectly exhausted, the barber finished what his daughter


George Cruikshank

had begun; and rewarding the girl with a shilling, Grimaldi and the manager took their leaves.

Having settled at the theatre, received his money, and made several purchases in the town, (for he always spent a per centage in every place where he had been successful,) Grimaldi returned to Liverpool on the 24th of August.

CHAPTER XX.

1817.

More provincial success.—Bologna and his economy.—Comparative dearness of Welsh Rare-bits and Partridges.—Remarkably odd modes of saving money.

Having no engagement at Liverpool,—indeed, having no time to accept one,—Grimaldi remained there only two days, at the expiration of which time he went to Hereford, and having waited on Mr. Crisp the manager, went to look at the theatre, which, to his great astonishment and concern, he found to be nothing more than a common square room, with a stage four yards wide and about as many high, the head of the statue in Don Juan being obscured by the flys, and thus rendered wholly invisible to the audience. What made this circumstance the more annoying, was, that on the statue being seen to nod its head depended the effect of one of the very best scenes of Scaramouch.

As Grimaldi did not hesitate to express his great mortification and annoyance, and his decided indisposition to act in such a place for four nights, which was the term originally proposed, a fresh arrangement was entered into, by which he engaged to play two nights at Hereford, and two at Worcester, where he knew there was a better theatre. He accordingly played two nights at Hereford, and two at Worcester. At the former town the receipts were on the first night 42*l.*, and on the second 45*l.*, his share of the total being 43*l.* 10*s.* At Worcester, the receipts of the first night were 87*l.*, and of the second 93*l.* 16*s.*: here he also received a moiety of the two nights' receipts.

Having now concluded his provincial engagements, Grimaldi repaired to Cheltenham for rest and relaxation, and remained there until the second week in September, when he returned to London. While at Cheltenham, he stumbled upon his old friend Richer, the rope-dancer, already mentioned as having been engaged at Sadlers Wells at an early period of Grimaldi's career. He had retired from the profession, and was married to the widow of a clergyman who had died extremely

rich. They were living in great style, and to all appearance very happy.

The following account of Grimaldi's gains during this short excursion will afford some idea of the immense sums he was in the habit of receiving about this time. The amount was so much more than he had supposed, that on going over the calculation he could scarcely believe he was correct. It was as follows:—

Brighton, four nights	£100	0	0
Birmingham, six	210	0	0
Worcester, one	50	0	0
Glasgow and Edinburgh, nine	417	0	0
Berwick, two	102	7	0
Liverpool, sixteen	324	14	0
Preston, two	86	0	0
Hereford, two	43	10	0
Worcester, (2nd visit,) two	90	8	0
	£1423	19	0

The accounts which he received at Sadlers Wells on his return were unusually bad. They were fully corroborated by Mr. Hughes, who informed him it had been the very worst season the theatre had ever known.

Having nothing to do at Covent Garden, and

entertaining a very pleasant and lively recollection of the profits of his last trip, Grimaldi determined on making another excursion, and accepted an offer from Elliston to play four nights at Birmingham, by which he cleared 150*l.* From Birmingham he went to Leicester, where Elliston also had a theatre, and where he played for two nights, being accompanied by Mr. Brunton, who was Elliston's stage-manager. They were very successful, Grimaldi's share of the receipts being 70*l.*

The morning after his last performance here, Grimaldi took a post-chaise and started for Chester, where he had undertaken to act for one week. As the chaise drove up to the White Lion, the London coach drove up too, and seated on the outside he saw, to his great surprise, his old friend Old Bologna, who, it appeared, had been engaged expressly to perform with him in "Mother Goose." The unexpected meeting afforded great pleasure to both, and having ordered a private sitting-room and a good dinner, they sat down together and fell into conversation; in the course of which, Bologna, by various hints and other slight remarks, gave his friend to understand that his old characteristic of never being able without a strong

effort to make up his mind to spend a penny was by no means impaired by time. The room was handsomely fitted up; and the dinner, which was speedily placed before them, consisted of a great variety of expensive delicacies, the sight of which awakened in Bologna's mind a great many misgivings concerning the bill, which were not at all lessened by the landladay's informing them, with a low curtsey, as she placed the first dish on the table, that she knew who they were, and that she would answer for their being provided with every luxury and comfort the house would afford. They were no sooner left alone, than Bologna, with a very dissatisfied air, informed his friend that he saw it would never do to stay in that house.

"Why not?" inquired Grimaldi.

"Because of the expense," he answered. "Bless me! look at the accommodations: what do you suppose they 'll charge for all this? It won't suit me, Joe; I shall be off."

"You can do as you please," rejoined his friend; "but if you 'll take my advice, you 'll remain where you are: for I have found from experience, that if there is a choice between a first-rate

and a second-rate house, one should always go to the former. There you have the best articles at a fair price; while at the other you have bad things, worse served up and enormously dear."

Bologna was ultimately prevailed upon not to leave the house, contenting himself with various economical resolutions which he commenced putting in practice when the waiter appeared to know if they would order supper.

"Supper!" exclaimed Bologna; "certainly not; not on any account. Suppers are extremely unhealthy; I never take them by any chance."

"You may get some supper for *me*," said Grimaldi, "and have it ready at half-past eleven."

"What will you like to order, sir?"

"I 'll leave it to the landlady. Anything nice will do."

"Good Heaven!" said Bologna, as the waiter went out of the room, "what a bill you 'll have to pay here!"

They strolled about the town; arranged with the manager to commence next night with "Mother Goose," and having beguiled the time till supper, repaired to the inn, where a fine brace of partridges done to a turn were placed before Grimaldi, which

his companion eyed with very hungry looks, congratulating himself aloud, however, upon having saved himself that expense at all events.

There was a silence for some minutes, broken only by the clatter of the knives and forks; and then Bologna, who had been walking up and down the room in a restless manner, stopped short and inquired if the birds were nice.

"Very," replied Grimaldi, helping himself again. "They are delicious."

Bologna walked up and down the room faster after this, and then rang the bell with great vehemence. The waiter appeared, and Bologna, after long consideration hesitatingly ordered a Welsh rare-bit.

"Certainly, sir," said the man; and by the time Grimaldi had finished his supper, the Welsh rare-bit appeared.

"Stop a minute, waiter," said Bologna. "Grimaldi, do you mean to take supper every night?"

"Certainly. Every night."

"Well then, waiter, remember to bring me a Welsh rare-bit every evening when Mr. Grimaldi takes his supper. I don't want it; but it has so rude an appearance to sit looking on while

another man is eating, that I must do it as a matter of form and comfort. You 'll not forget?"

"I 'll be sure to remember, sir," was the reply.

The moment he was gone, Grimaldi burst into a great roar of laughter, which his friend took in high dudgeon, muttering various observations regarding extravagance, which were responded to by divers remarks relative to shabbiness. Neither of them gave way, and the supper arrangement was regularly acted upon; Grimaldi always having some warm dish of game or poultry, and Bologna solacing himself with a Welsh rare-bit, and the reflection of having saved money, while his companion spent it. They stayed at Chester nine days in all, and when the bills were brought at last, found, as Grimaldi had anticipated, that the charges were moderate, and well merited by the manner in which they had been accommodated.

"Well, Bologna," said Grimaldi with a triumphant air, "are you satisfied?"

"Pretty well," he replied. "I must acknowledge that the bills are not so heavy as I feared they would have been; but there is one terrible

mistake in mine. Look here! they have charged me for supper every night just as they have charged you. That must be wrong, you know: I have had nothing but Welsh rare-bits."

"Certainly," said Grimaldi, looking over the bill. "You had better ring for the waiter: I have no doubt he can explain the matter."

The bell was rung, and the waiter came.

"Oh! here's a mistake, waiter," said Bologna, handing him the bill. "You have charged me for supper every night here, and you 'll remember I only had a Welsh rare-bit. Just get it altered, will you?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied the waiter, glancing from the bill to the customer; "it 's quite right, sir."

"Quite right?"

"Quite, sir: it 's the rule of the house, sir,—the rule of every house on the road,—to charge in that way. Half-a-crown for supper, sir; cold beef, fowl, game, or bread and cheese: always half-a-crown, sir. There were a great many other dishes that you might have had; but you recollect giving a particular order for a Welsh rare-bit, sir?"

The saving man said not another word, but paid the nine half-crowns for the nine Welsh rare-bits, to his own great wrath and his friend's unspeakable amusement.

The next morning they returned to London, and on the road Grimaldi had another instance of his companion's parsimony, which determined him never to travel in his company again. When the coach came to the door, he was perfectly amazed to find that the economical Harlequin was going to travel outside, but not surprised to hear him whisper, when he expressed his astonishment, that he should save a pound by it or more.

"Yes," answered Grimaldi, "and catch a cold by sitting outside all night after your exertions at the theatre, which will cost you 20*l.* at least."

"You know nothing about it," replied Bologna with a wink; "I shall be safe inside as well as you."

"What! and pay outside fare?"

"Just so," replied he. "I'll tell you how it is. I've ascertained that there's one place vacant inside, and that the coach belongs to our landlady. Now, I mean to remind her what a

deal of money we have spent in the house; to tell her that I shall be soon coming here again; and to put it to her whether she won't let me ride at least a part of the way inside."

Grimaldi was not a little offended and vexed by this communication, feeling, that as they had been stopping at the house as companions and friends, he was rather involved in the shabbiness of his fellow-traveller. His angry remonstrances, however, produced not the slightest effect. Bologna acted precisely as he had threatened, and received permission from the good lady of the house, who was evidently much surprised at the application, to occupy the vacant inside place; it being stipulated and understood on both sides, that if anywhere on the road a passenger were found requiring an inside place, Bologna should either give up his, or pay the regular fare on to London.

As Grimaldi could not prevent this arrangement, he was compelled to listen to it with a good grace. The manager, who came to see them off, brought 100*l.* for Grimaldi, all in three-shilling pieces, packed up in a large brown paper parcel; and this part of the luggage being stowed in the coach-pocket, away they went, Bologna congra-

tulating himself on his diplomacy, and Grimaldi consoling himself with the reflection that he should know how to avoid him in future, and that he was now at least safe from any further exhibition of his parsimony during the journey. The former resolution he kept, but in the latter conclusion he was desperately wrong.

It was evening when they started, and at four o'clock in the morning, when they stopped to change horses, a customer for an inside place presented himself; whereupon the driver, opening the coach-door, civilly reminded Bologna of the conditions upon which he held his seat.

Bologna was fast asleep the first time the man spoke, and having been roused, had the matter explained to him once more; upon which he sat bolt upright in the coach, and repeating all that the man had said, inquired with great distinctness whether he understood it to be put to him, that he must either pay the inside fare or get out.

"That's it, sir," said the coachman.

"Very well," said Bologna, without the slightest alteration of tone or manner; "then I shall do neither the one nor the other."

The coachman, falling back a pace or two from

the door, and recovering from a brief trance of astonishment, addressed the passengers, the would-be passenger, the hostlers and stable-boys who were standing around, upon the mean and shabby conduct of the individual inside. Upon this, the passengers remonstrated, the would-be passenger stormed, the coachman and guard bellowed, the hostlers hooted, the stable-boys grinned, Grimaldi worked himself into a state of intense vexation, and the cause of all the tumult sat quite immovable.

"Now, I 'll tell you what it is," said the coachman, when his eloquence was quite exhausted,—"one word 's as good as a thousand. Will you get out?"

"No, I will not," answered the sleepy Harlequin; "shut the door."

"Very well," said the man; "then off goes my benjamin, and out you come like a sack of sawdust."

As the man was of that portly form and stout build which is the badge of all his tribe, and as, stimulated by the approving murmurs of the lookers-on, he began suiting the action to the word without delay, Bologna thought it best to

come to terms, so turned out into the cold air, and took his seat on the coach-top, amidst several expressions of very undisguised contempt from his fellow-passengers.

They performed the rest of the journey in this way, and Grimaldi alighting at the Angel at Islington, left Bologna to go on to the coach-office in Holborn, previously giving both the guard and coachman something beyond their usual fee, as an intelligible hint that he was not of the same caste as his companion.

Two or three days afterwards, meeting Bologna in the street, he inquired how he had got on at the coach-office.

"Oh, very well," said Bologna; "they abused me finely."

"Just what I expected."

"Yes, and very glad I was of it too."

"What do you mean?"

"Saved my money, Joe; that's what I mean. If they had been civil, of course I must have given something not only to the coachman, but to the guard besides; but as they were not civil, of course I did not give either of them a penny, and so saved something handsome by it."

Bologna had many good qualities, and he and Grimaldi always remained on good terms; but as he was not upon the whole the most entertaining travelling companion that could be found, they never afterwards encountered each other in that capacity.

CHAPTER XXI.

1817 to 1818.

Production of "Baron Munchausen."—Anecdote of Ellar the Harlequin, showing how he jumped through the Moon and put his hand out.—Grimaldi becomes a Proprietor of Sadlers Wells.—Anecdotes of the late Duke of York, Sir Godfrey Webster, a Gold Snuff-Box, his late Majesty, Newcastle Salmon, and a Coal Mine.

Grimaldi need not have hastened back to town with so much expedition, for he was not in request at Covent Garden, as it turned out, until November, and then only for a night or two in "La Perouse." Still, as it was uncertain whether he might not be wanted at a few days' notice, he was fearful of accepting any provincial engagement of more than a week's duration.

Sadlers Wells was closed when he reached London, after a season which had entailed a very severe loss on the proprietors; the balance against whom was so heavy, as to cause it to be rumoured

that one more such season would throw a few of the shares into new hands, which in reality shortly afterwards occurred. In a pecuniary point of view it was an extremely fortunate thing for Grimaldi that he had remained absent from Sadlers Wells during the summer of 1817, his gains in the provinces being considerably more than they would have been if he had remained in town; while, on the other hand, the degree of exertion he had to encounter in the provinces was greatly inferior to that which he must have sustained at Sadlers Wells. In addition to the 1423*l.* 19*s.* of which an account is given in the last chapter, he received for four nights at Birmingham 150*l.*, for two nights at Leicester 70*l.*, and for six at Chester 100*l.*, making a clear gain of 1743*l.* 19*s.* for fifty-six nights' performance; whereas if he had remained at Sadlers Wells, he would have merely received his thirty weeks' salary at 12*l.* each, and two benefits of 150*l.* each, making a total of 660*l.* for one hundred and eighty nights' performance. He was therefore a gainer not only in the saving of bodily exertion, but in the sum of 1073*l.* 19*s.*, by his fortunate and unlooked-for expulsion from Sadlers Wells.

The Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden was entitled "Baron Munchausen," and proved as successful as its predecessors had done for some years. During its run, a circumstance occurred worthy of mention, as an instance of the brutality of a man belonging to the theatre.

One night, a fellow engaged as a carpenter, and whose business it likewise was to assist in holding a carpet in which the pantomime characters are caught when they jump through the scenes, went to Ellar, who was the Harlequin, and holding up the carpet, said that it was very dry, thereby intimating in the cant phrase that he required something to drink. Ellar, from some cause or other, either because he had already feed the men liberally, or was engaged at the moment in conversation, returned some slight answer, unaccompanied by the required gratuity, and the fellow went away grumbling. On the following evening, Ellar was informed that the man had been heard to talk about being revenged upon him: he only laughed at the threat, however, and all went on as usual until the third night afterwards, when, as he and Grimaldi were on the stage together, in

the scene where he used to jump through the "moon," and after the former had given the cue for him to take the leap, he was surprised to observe that he hesitated, and still more so when, drawing close to him, he said in a whisper, "I am afraid they don't mean to catch me. I have knocked three times against the scene, and asked if they were ready; but nobody has said a word in reply."

"It's impossible," whispered Grimaldi: "I don't believe there is a man in the theatre who would dream of such a thing. Jump man, jump!"

Ellar still paused, and Grimaldi fancying that symptoms of impatience were beginning to appear among the audience, told him so, and again urged him not to stop the business of the scene, but to jump at once.

"Well, well," cried Ellar, "here goes!—but Heaven knows how it will end!" And in a complete state of uncertainty whether any men were there to catch him, or he was left to break his neck, he went through the scene. His fears were not without good ground; for the fellows whose business it was to hold the carpet were holding

it, as they well knew, in a position where he could never reach it, and down he fell. Suspecting his danger while in the very act of going through the panel, he endeavoured to save his head by sacrificing a hand. In this he fortunately succeeded, as he sustained no other injury than breaking the hand upon which he fell. The accident occasioned him great pain and inconvenience, but he insisted on going through the part, and the audience were quite ignorant of the occurrence.

The circumstance was not long in reaching the ears of Mr. Harris and Mr. Fawcett, who were made acquainted not only with Ellar's accident, but with the man's threat, and the occasion which had given rise to it. Fawcett immediately caused all the carpenters to assemble on the stage, and told them, that if Mr. Ellar would undertake to say he believed the accident had been brought about wilfully, they should every one be discharged on the spot. Ellar being sent for and informed that this was the proprietor's deliberate intention, replied without hesitation, that he could not believe it was intentional, and whispered to

Grimaldi as he left the house, that the fellow had got a wife and half-a-dozen children dependant upon him.

This praiseworthy resolution, which prevented several men from being thrown out of employment, was rendered the more praiseworthy by Ellar's having no earthly doubt that the mistake was intentional, and by his knowing perfectly well that if he had fallen on his head in lieu of his hand, he would most probably have been killed on the spot.

While upon the subject of stage accidents, we may remark, that very few of these mischances befel Grimaldi, considering the risks to which a pantomime actor is exposed, and the serious injuries he is constantly encountering. The hazards were not so great in Grimaldi's case as they would have been to any other man similarly situated, inasmuch as his Clown was a very quiet personage, so far as the use or abuse of his limbs was concerned, and by no means addicted to those violent contortions of body which are painful alike to actor and spectator. His Clown was an embodied conception of his own, whose humour was in his looks, and not in his tumbles, and who

excited the laughter of an audience while standing upon his heels, and not upon his head. If the present race of Clowns and the rising generation of that honourable fraternity would endeavour to imitate him in this respect, they would be more at ease themselves, and place their audiences more at ease also.

In February 1818, Grimaldi received several intimations that if he chose to make application to the proprietors of Sadlers Wells, he might return almost upon his own terms; but he declined doing so, partly from feeling rather annoyed at the manner in which he had been treated, and partly from discovering how well provincial excursions answered in a pecuniary point of view, and how much more conducive they were to his health than remaining in town. Nevertheless, when Mrs. Hughes, the widow of his friend, waited upon him and intreated him herself to return, he scarcely knew how to refuse, and at last told her that if he returned at all to that establishment it must be as a part proprietor. He said this, thinking that it would either release him from any further requests to go back to Sadlers Wells, or enable him to share in the profits which had been for many

years accruing to the proprietors. But in this idea, as in many others, he was totally mistaken. After some little preliminaries, in the shape of meetings, discussions, waving of objections, &c. the proposal was accepted, and he became the purchaser of a certain number of shares in Sadlers Wells from Mrs. Hughes herself. This being arranged, Grimaldi accepted an engagement for the ensuing season upon his old terms, merely bargaining that he should be permitted to leave town about the end of July for six weeks in each year, to fulfil provincial engagements.

The result of Grimaldi's first season's proprietorship was far from propitious. At first all went on very well; but after he had left (as previously stipulated) in July, the houses fell to nothing, and when he arrived in town again in September, he was informed that there would be a clear loss instead of any profit. This both surprised and vexed him; for Sadlers Wells had always been considered a very good property, and he had fully expected that he should, merely upon becoming a proprietor, have to receive a sum of money yearly, in addition to his regular salary.

The first proprietors' meeting which he attended, occurred a few days after the close of the season; and then all the books and papers connected with the business of the theatre being produced, it was found that a heavy loss was really attendant upon the year's campaign.

"And pray, what may be the amount?" he inquired rather dolefully,—for he now began to repent of his purchase, and to fancy that he saw all his recently-acquired wealth fading away.

Mr. Richard Hughes shook his head when he heard his question, and said, "Ah, Joe, the loss is 333*l.* 13*s.*"

"Oh, come!" cried Grimaldi, "it 's not so bad as I thought,—333*l.* 13*s.* is not so much among six persons!" which was the number of proprietors at that time.

"Joe," said Mr. Hughes gravely, "is this the first meeting you have attended?"

"Yes."

"Ah, then I do not wonder you have misunderstood me. What I meant was, that the loss to each person is 333*l.* 13*s.*, the gross loss being six times that sum."

This communication was a very unexpected

blow to all his hopes; but as there was nothing better to be done, he paid his share of the money at once with as good a grace as he could assume, having thus gratified his wish to become a proprietor of Sadlers Wells by the expenditure, first, of a large sum of money for his shares, and secondly, of another sum of upwards of 330*l.* at the end of the first season.

Grimaldi anticipated other heavy demands upon his provincial gains of 1817 and 1818, and bitterly regretted having connected himself with the establishment in any other way than as a salaried actor. The losses of this season verified the rumours he had heard regarding the other proprietors, three of whom, namely, Messrs. T. and C. Dibdin, and Barfoot, were unable to pay up their deficiencies, —upon which, agreeably to an article in the rules of the copartnership, they were sold by auction, on the 21st of July 1820, and purchased by Mr. R. Hughes and Mr. Dixon of Barbican.

While playing in "Baron Munchausen" at Covent Garden one evening very shortly after Ellar's accident, he observed his Royal Highness the Duke of York, accompanied by Sir Godfrey Webster and another gentleman, sitting in his

Royal Highness's private box, and laughing very heartily at the piece. Upon his coming off the stage about the middle of the pantomime, he found Sir Godfrey waiting for him.

"Hard work, Grimaldi!"

"Hard and hot, Sir Godfrey!"

"Have a pinch of snuff, Grimaldi," said Sir Godfrey: "it will refresh you." With this he produced from behind him, where he had been holding it, the largest snuff-box Grimaldi had ever beheld. The sight of it amused him much; Sir Godfrey laughed and said, "Take it to that gentleman," pointing to the Pantaloon, who was on the stage, "and see if he would like a pinch."

Grimaldi willingly complied, and having shortly afterwards to enact a foppish scene, swaggered about the stage, ostentatiously displaying this huge box, which from its enormous size really looked like a caricature made expressly for the purpose, and offered a pinch to the Pantaloon with all that affectation of politeness in which he was so ludicrous. The audience laughed at its gigantic size; and the Pantaloon, looking suspiciously at him, demanded,

"Where did you get this box?"

To this, affecting modest reserve and diffidence, he made no answer, but turned away his head.

"You've stolen it!" continued Pantaloon.

This the injured Clown strongly denied upon his honour, with many bows and slides, and averred it was a gift.

"Given to you!" cried the Pantaloon: "and pray, who gave it to you?"

In answer to this, he pointed significantly to the box whither Sir Godfrey had retired, and the merriment which this occasioned was great indeed. The Duke, to whom, as he discovered afterwards, the box belonged, was convulsed with laughter; nor were the gentlemen with him less merry, while the audience, either suspecting that some joke was afloat, or being amused at the scene, joined in the hearty laughter emanating from the royal box.

"Where are you going to take the box?" asked Pantaloon as he turned to go off.

"Where it has often been before," cried Grimaldi, pointing upwards: "to my uncle's!" And so saying, he ran off the stage amid a fresh burst of merriment.

Sir Godfrey was with him in two minutes. Whether he thought the box was really in danger of being so disposed of, is uncertain, but he popped round behind the scenes as quickly as possible.

"Capital, Grimaldi!" he cried, still laughing; "you have won me a wager — so ought to go snacks in it;" and he slipped five guineas into his hand.

"So, so," said the Duke of York, who, unperceived by Grimaldi, had followed his friend; "this is the way stakes are divided, eh?—I 'll tell you what, Sir Godfrey, although Mr. Grimaldi is not a porter, I entertain no doubt that he would carry your box for you every evening upon such terms as these!"

Having vented this joke, his Royal Highness returned to his box. As he was not often behind the scenes at the theatre, this was, with one exception, the only time Grimaldi encountered him. The other occasion was in 1824, when his Royal Highness took the chair at the Theatrical Fund dinner, and kindly inquiring after his health, of some one who sat near him, desired to see him. He was officiating as one of the stewards, but was of course surprised at the

Duke's wish, and immediately presented himself. He received him with great kindness, and hearing from his own lips that his infirmities had compelled him to relinquish the exercise of his profession, said, he was extremely sorry to hear him say so, but heartily trusted, notwithstanding, that he might recover yet, for his loss would be "a national calamity." He added, when Grimaldi expressed his acknowledgments, "I remember your father well; he was a funny man, and taught me and some of my sisters to dance. If ever I can be of any service to you, Grimaldi, call upon me freely."

George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales, Grimaldi had often seen at Drury Lane in the earlier portion of his career; and the late King, then Duke of Clarence, was frequently at Covent Garden, where the contrast of his unpretending demeanour with the grimaces and absurdities of the young striplings of fashion and folly was the theme of general admiration, and of many remarks by no means complimentary to the wisdom of the young lords themselves. He mentions that on one occasion he entered the Covent Garden green-room rather suddenly, and was surprised to see the Duke of Clarence

sitting there in conversation with two or three of his boys, whom he frequently took with him to the theatre. Somewhat confused and disconcerted, he bowed and was about to retreat, when the Duke said, "Nay, pray come in, Grimaldi."

"I beg your Royal Highness' pardon," he said; "I feared to intrude upon your conversation."

"Intrude!" echoed the Duke smiling. "No, no, I am the only intruder here." And rising from his seat, he would not resume it until Grimaldi had taken up his position near him.

The Covent Garden season terminated on the 17th of July, and his benefit at Sadlers Wells, which occurred two nights afterwards, being over, (the receipts were 243*l.* 16*s.*), he left town to fulfil the engagements he had entered into with country managers. He went first to Liverpool, where he acted from the 27th of July until the 19th of August: his profits amounted to 327*l.*, being two pounds and a few shillings more than the result of his previous visit. Thence he went to Lancaster, the theatre of which town, like the one at Berwick, he found up a stable-yard, but very neat and commodious. Here he played two nights, for which he received 111*l.* 16*s.* From this town

he went to Newcastle, where he performed five nights, realising as his share of the profits 243*l.* 14*s.* While upon this last expedition, he received a letter from Mr. Harris, in which that gentleman informed him that it would be necessary for him to be in London by the 7th of September to attend the opening of Covent Garden; in consequence of which he was obliged to forego his Edinburgh engagement with Mr. Murray, which annoyed him greatly, for he had calculated upon clearing pretty nigh five hundred pounds by that portion of his trip; besides, being at Newcastle, he was within one day's journey of Edinburgh. However, he was obliged to attend to the summons, and so returned to London, where a few days afterwards he encountered Mr. Harris, with whom he had the following vexatious colloquy.

"Ah, Joe!" he exclaimed with evident surprise, "why I did not expect to see you for three weeks to come!"

"You did not, sir!" exclaimed Grimaldi with at least an equal degree of astonishment.

"Certainly not: I thought you were going into Scotland."

"So I was: but I received a letter from you,

recalling me to town by to-day; which summons I have obeyed by sacrificing my Edinburgh excursion, and with it about five hundred pounds."

"Ah!" said Mr. Harris, "I see now how all this is. I suppose you left Newcastle the same day you received my letter?"

"I did, sir."

"That was unfortunate; for I changed my mind after writing that letter, and wrote again on the following day, giving you permission to stay away until the first week of October. Never mind; as you *are* here, we 'll find you something to do; — we 'll try "Mother Goose" for a night or two next week."

To this obliging promise he made no reply, not deriving the smallest degree of comfort from it. Mr. Harris, observing that his offer had failed in producing the intended effect, added, "And as to the loss of your Edinburgh engagement, that I must endeavour to make up to you in some way or other at a future time."

He thanked him for this kindness, and Mr. Harris did not forget the promise.

During his stay at Newcastle, he recollected that the best pickled salmon sold in London was

called by that name and came from thence, and so resolved to have a feast of it, naturally concluding that he should procure it in high perfection in the place whence it was brought for sale. Accordingly, one evening he ordered some to be got ready for supper upon his return from the theatre; which the waiter at the hotel he was staying at, promised should be done, but in so curious a manner that he could not help fancying he did not understand his meaning. He therefore asked him if he had heard what he said.

"Oh dear, yes, sir!" was the reply: "I 'll take care it shall be ready, sir."

This appeared to settle the point, and as soon as the play was over he returned to the inn, anticipating how much better the salmon would be than the London pickle. The cloth was duly spread, and a covered dish placed before him.

"Supper, sir—quite ready, sir," said the waiter, whisking away the cover, and presenting to his sight a mutton cutlet. "You 'll find this excellent, sir."

"No doubt; but I ordered pickled salmon!"

"I beg your pardon, sir,—did you, sir?" (with a slight appearance of confusion.)

"Did I! Yes, to be sure I did. Do you mean to say you do not recollect it?"

"I may have forgotten it, sir; I suppose I *have* forgotten it, sir."

"Well, it does not matter much; I can make a supper of this. But don't forget to let me have some pickled salmon to-morrow evening."

"Certainly not, sir," was the waiter's answer; and so the matter ended for that night.

On the following evening Grimaldi invited the manager at the close of the performances to go home and sup with him, which he willingly did. As on the preceding evening, the meal was prepared and awaiting their arrival. Down they sat, and upon the removal of the cover, a rump-steak presented itself. A good deal surprised, he said to the waiter,

"What 's this! have you forgotten the pickled salmon again?"

"Why, really, sir, dear me!" hesitated the man,—"I believe I have—I really fancied you said you would have beef to-night, sir. To-morrow night, sir, I 'll take care that you have some."

"Now, mind that you *do* remember it, for to-morrow is the last day I shall be here, and I have

a particular wish to taste some before I leave the town."

"Depend upon me, sir,—you shall certainly have some to-morrow, sir," said the waiter. The manager preferred meat, so it was no great matter, and they took their hot supper very comfortably.

There was a crowded audience next night, which was Grimaldi's benefit and the last of his performance. He played Acres and Clown, received the cash, bade farewell to the manager, and hurried to his inn, greatly fatigued by his performance, and looking forward with much pleasure to the pickled salmon.

"All right to-night, waiter?" he inquired.

"*All* right to-night, sir," said the waiter, rubbing his hands. "Supper is quite ready, sir."

"Good! Let me have my bill to-night, because I start early in the morning."

Grimaldi turned to the supper-table: there was a dish, with a cover; the waiter removed it with a flourish, and presented to his astonished eyes—not the long-expected pickled salmon, but a veal-cutlet. These repeated disappointments were rather too much, so he pulled the bell with great vehemence and called for the landlord.

The landlord came, and Grimaldi having stated his grievance, he appeared to understand as little about the matter as his waiter; but at length, after many explanations, Grimaldi learned to his great surprise, that pickled salmon was an article unknown in Newcastle, all Newcastle pickled salmon being sent to London for sale. The brilliant waiter not having the remotest conception of what was wanted, and determined not to confess his ignorance, had resolved to try all the dishes in the most general request until he came to the right one.

Grimaldi saw a coal-mine on this expedition, his curiosity having been roused by the manager's glowing description. We should rather say that he went down into one, for his survey was brief enough. He descended some two or three hundred feet in a basket, and was met at the bottom of the shaft by a guide, who had not conducted him far, when a piece of coal, weighing about three tons, fell with a loud noise upon a spot over which they had just passed.

"Hollo!" exclaimed Grimaldi, greatly terrified. "What's that!"

"Hech!" said the guide, "it's only a wee bit of

cool fallen doon: we ha'e that twa or three times a day."

"Have you?" replied Grimaldi, running back to the shaft. "Then I 'll thank you to ring for my basket, or call out for it, for I 'll stop here no longer."

The basket was lowered, and he ascended to the light without delay, having no wish whatever to take his chance again among the "wee bits of cool."

CHAPTER XXII.

1818 to 1823.

Profit and Loss.—Appearance of his Son at Covent Garden.—His last engagement at Sadlers Wells.—Accommodation of the Giants in the Dublin Pavilion.—Alarming state of his health.—His engagement at the Coburg.—The liberality of Mr. Harris.—Rapid decay of Grimaldi's constitution, his great sufferings, and last performance at Covent Garden.—He visits Cheltenham and Birmingham with great success.—Colonel Berkeley, Mr. Charles Kemble, and Mr. Bunn.

By his six weeks' excursion in 1818, Grimaldi cleared 682*l.* 12*s.*; but the disastrous result of the Sadlers Wells season and the expenditure of ready money in the purchase of his shares swallowed up nearly the whole of his gains in the provinces—so that notwithstanding his great success and the enormous sums he had so recently acquired, the autumn of 1818 found him still poor, and entirely dependent on his salary for support. He looked forward, however, to the next season at Sadlers Wells in the hope that some success

might repay a portion of the money he had already lost.

The Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden was "Harlequin Don Quixote," which was not quite so successful as the pantomimes at that house usually had been, although Grimaldi played Sancho Panza in the opening, and afterwards Clown. Its success was so equivocal, that another pantomime, called "Harlequin and Cinderella," was produced in April; but it had no greater success than its predecessor, for it went off but indifferently and did not run long. Having a few nights to spare in March, he accepted a theatrical invitation from Lynn in Norfolk, where he acted four nights and received one hundred and sixty pounds.

The opening of Sadlers Wells was attended by many difficulties and embarrassments. Only ten days before the commencement of the season, Mr. Charles Dibdin suddenly relinquished his post of acting stage-manager, and was with great difficulty prevailed upon to make the necessary arrangements for the first week. As he left the theatre at Whitsuntide and nobody could be found to supply his place, Grimaldi was obliged

to fill it himself, and to relinquish, though with great unwillingness, his summer excursion, with all its advantages. He produced a new pantomime of his own invention, called "The Fates," which ran the whole of the season and drew very good houses. The result was, that when the books were made up at the end of the season, each of the proprietors had something to receive; which was a very agreeable improvement on the untoward prospects with which the preceding year had opened.

Gradually, but surely, during the whole of this year Grimaldi felt his health sinking, and heavy and painful infirmities creeping upon him. He learnt when it was too late, that if at this time he had retired from the profession, and devoted one or two years to relaxation and quiet, his constitution would in all probability have rallied, and he would have been enabled to resume his usual occupations, with every hope of being long able to perform them, instead of being compelled, as he eventually was, to quit the stage when he was little more than forty years old.

Between September 1819, when Covent Garden reopened, and Christmas, when the new pantomime

was brought forward, Grimaldi frequently appeared as Kasrac in "Aladdin;" nor did his increasing infirmities render his performance more painful or wearisome than usual. The pantomime was called "Harlequin and Friar Bacon," and was exceedingly successful, as it was received with great approbation and was repeated for fifty-two nights. This season his son was for the first time regularly engaged at Covent Garden. He played Fribble in the opening, and afterwards the Lover (a character which has now become obsolete), and bade fair to become a great public favourite.

On the 23rd of April, Farley produced his melodrama of "Undine, or the Spirit of the Waters," in which Grimaldi also sustained a new character.

At Sadlers Wells a new system had been acted upon. The authorities being greatly puzzled in the choice of a stage-manager, and having received an offer from Mr. Howard Payne to take the theatre for one season at a certain rental, agreed to let it. Mr. Howard Payne commenced his campaign at Easter, and a most unprofitable one it proved, for he lost a considerable sum of money, as did the proprietors also, and Grimaldi not unnaturally began to be weary of the

speculation. As both his benefits, however, were bumpers, he left the theatre in good spirits in the month of September, to fulfil an engagement at Dublin, little dreaming at the time, that with the exception of his farewell night, he was destined never again to act upon the Sadlers Wells stage.

Grimaldi's travelling companions were Ellar and his son, all three being engaged by Mr. Harris to act at his theatre in Dublin, and receiving permission to absent themselves from Covent Garden for that express purpose. Since his last journey to the Irish capital in 1805, roads and coaches had improved, and steam-packets had supplied the place of the old sailing-boats, so that they reached their destination in half the time which the same journey had occupied before.

The theatre in which they were to act was called the Pavilion, and had formerly been an assembly-room. It was perfectly round, and very ill adapted for dramatic representations; the stage room, too, was so inconvenient, and they were so pressed for want of space, that when "Harlequin Gulliver" was in preparation they were at a loss where to put the Brobdignagians. These figures were so very cumbersome and so much in the way,

that the men who sustained the parts were at last obliged to be dressed and put away in an obscure corner before the curtain was raised, whence they were brought forward when wanted upon the stage, and into which they were obliged to retreat when they had no more to do, and to remain there as quietly as they could, until the pantomime was over, there being actually no room to get them out of their cases. The dresses and makings-up were very cumbrous and inconvenient; but no other mode of proceeding presented itself, and the unfortunate giants were obliged to make the best of a bad bargain, and to remain in a great state of perspiration and fatigue until they could be reduced to the level of ordinary men. Grimaldi pitied the poor fellows so much, that after the first night's performance was over, he thought right to represent to them that no relief could be afforded, and to ask whether they could make up their minds to endure so much labour for the future.

"Well, then," said the spokesman of the party, "we have talked it over together, and we have agreed to do it every night, if your honour,—long life to you!—will only promise to do one thing for

us; and that is, just to let us have a leetle noggin of whisky after the green rag comes down."

This moderate request was readily complied with, and the giants behaved themselves exceedingly well, and never got drunk.

The party stayed seven weeks in Dublin. Grimaldi made a great deal of money by the trip, and realised by his benefit alone, two hundred pounds.

The pantomime at Covent Garden was called "Harlequin and Mother Bunch," in which both Grimaldi and his son were engaged. It was followed in April by the highly successful piece of "Cherry and Fair Star," in which Grimaldi played "Topac."

Sadlers Wells was let at Easter, for the ensuing three seasons, to Mr. Egerton, well known to the public as a performer at Covent Garden. He and Grimaldi had been very good friends for many years; but some clauses being introduced into his agreement for hiring the theatre which Grimaldi as a proprietor so strongly disapproved that he refused to affix his signature to the document, a coolness took place between them which was never afterwards removed. Notwithstanding this difference, he

always continued to entertain a high respect for Egerton, who was greatly liked by his friends and the profession generally, and who had been at one period of his career a much better actor than the play-goers of the present day remember him. This gentleman was afterwards connected with Mr. Abbott in the management of the Victoria Theatre, in which speculation they both sustained considerable losses. He is since dead.

In the autumn, Ellar, Grimaldi, and his son again repaired to Dublin, making a stay of five weeks at the Birmingham Theatre, which was then in the hands of Mr. Bunn. Here they got up the pantomime of "Friar Bacon," which was played to excellent houses for twenty-four nights. Mr. Bunn behaved on this occasion, as Grimaldi states he did upon every other in which he was concerned, with great liberality, allowing him a salary of twenty pounds per week, and the son nine pounds per week, independent of half a clear benefit, the profits of which were great.*

* In another part of the data upon which these Memoirs are founded, Grimaldi has the following remarks concerning this gentleman, which, as he appears to have been anxious that they should obtain publicity, the Editor subjoins in his own

At Dublin "Friar Bacon" was played twenty-nine nights out of the thirty-two for which Grimaldi and his party were engaged, and the pieces were so successful, that it would have been the interest of all parties to prolong their engagements if the arrangements at Covent Gar-Garden had admitted of their doing so. It was at this period that, with an agony of mind perfectly indescribable, Grimaldi found his health giving way by alarming degrees beneath the ravages of premature old age. On the eighteenth night of their performance in Dublin, he became so ill that he was obliged to throw up his part at a very short notice, and to send im-

words:—"A great deal has been said about, and indeed against Mr. Bunn, since he has become a London manager; but I have had many opportunities of observing him and his mode of doing business, and I feel satisfied that he has most liberal notions, and would if it were in his power amply recompense according to their talents any *artiste* employed by him. I beg it may be understood that in this remark I do not allude in any way to myself; for, putting aside every consideration of what my talents might have been, my *name* alone stood so high as to ensure a full house at Birmingham:—I speak from what I know of his conduct with regard to others; and if even his industry meets with the success it deserves, I feel certain that the liberality of disposition which I have spoken of will be displayed in a commensurate degree."

mediately for medical aid. He was attended by one of the most eminent physicians in Dublin, and under his treatment recovered sufficiently to be enabled to resume his character in about a week. But he felt, although he could not bear to acknowledge it even to himself, that his restoration to health was only temporary, that his strength was rapidly failing him, that his limbs grew weaker and his frame became more shaken every succeeding day, and that utter decrepitude, with its long train of miseries and privations, was coming upon him. His presentiments were but too fully realized; but the realization of his worst fears came upon him with a rapidity which even he, conscious as he was of all the symptoms, had never deemed possible.

The successful sojourn of the party at Dublin at length drew to a close, as it was necessary that they should return to London to be in readiness for the pantomime. On the 6th of December they bade farewell to Ireland, and after a most boisterous voyage landed at Holyhead, whence they posted in haste to town, and the day after their arrival began the rehearsals for Christmas. In his ill state of health, Grimaldi was terribly

shaken by the journey home and the sea-sickness, and felt worse in point of general health than he had yet done.

The pantomime was "The Yellow Dwarf." Although the performers began to rehearse at an unusually late period, its success was perfect; but, notwithstanding that it ran forty-four nights, Grimaldi never thought it a favourite with the public. He himself played the Yellow Dwarf, and his son played a part called Guinea Pig. "Cherry and Fair Star" was revived at Easter, in consequence of its great success in the previous season, and answered the purpose extremely well.

During the whole of this summer Grimaldi's health gradually but steadily declined. Sometimes there were slight fluctuations for the better, in which he felt so much improved as to fancy that his strength was beginning to return; and although the next day's decay and lassitude showed but too clearly that they were brief intervals of strength, he fondly regarded these red-letter days as tokens of a real and permanent change for the better. Perhaps even now, as he had nothing to do at Sadlers Wells, and was too unwell to accept

country engagements, if he had remained quiet during the Covent Garden recess, lived with great regularity, and acted upon the best medical advice, he might have retained for many years longer some portion of his health and spirits. But Mr. Glossop, who was then the lessee of the Coburg Theatre (now the Victoria), made him an offer which he could not resist, and he acted there for six weeks at a considerable sum per week and a free benefit. The engagement turned out so profitable a one for the Management, that he might have renewed it for the same space of time if he had not become too ill to appear upon the stage.

At this crisis of his disorder Grimaldi was advised to try the Cheltenham waters. He went to Cheltenham in August, and being somewhat recovered by the change of air, consented to act for Farley and Abbott, who had taken the theatre on speculation, for twelve nights. He cleared 150*l.*; and whether this sum of money, or the waters, or the change of scene, revived him, is uncertain, but he felt greatly improved in health when he returned to London for the opening of Covent Garden, to commence what ultimately proved to be his last season at that theatre.

"Harlequin and the Ogress, or the Sleeping Beauty," was the pantomime of the season. The rehearsals went off very briskly, and the piece, when it was produced, met with the success which generally attended the production of pantomimes at that house. Nothing indeed could exceed the liberality displayed by Mr. Harris in getting up this species of entertainment; to which circumstance, in a great measure, the almost uniform success of the pantomimes may be attributed. This spirit was not confined to the stage and its appointments, but was extended in an unusual degree to the actors also. Every suggestion was readily listened to, and as readily acted upon, if it appeared at all reasonable; every article of dress was provided at the expense of the Management; the principal actors were allowed a pint of wine each, every night the pantomime was played, and on the evening of its first representation they were invited to a handsome dinner at the Piazza Coffee-house, whither they all repaired directly the rehearsal was over. At these dinners Farley took the chair, while Brandon acted as vice; and there is no doubt that they materially contributed to the success of the pan-

tomimes. There can be no better means of securing the hearty good-will and co-operation of the parties employed in undertakings of this or any other description than treating them in a spirit of generosity and courtesy.

In this pantomime Grimaldi played a part with the very pantomimic name of "Grimgribber;" and that sustained by his son was expressively described in the bills as "Whirligig." It ran until nearly the following Easter, when a new melodrama by Farley appeared, called "The Vision of the Sun, or the Orphan of Peru."

In this piece, which came out on the 23rd of March 1823, Grimaldi played a prominent character; but even during the earlier nights of its very successful representation, he could scarcely struggle through his part. His frame was weak and debilitated, his joints stiff, and his muscles relaxed; every effort he made was followed by cramps and spasms of the most agonizing nature. Men were obliged to be kept waiting at the side-scenes, who caught him in their arms when he staggered from the stage, and supported him, while others chafed his limbs,—which was obliged to be incessantly done until he was called for the next scene, or he

could not have appeared again. Every time he came off, his sinews were gathered up into huge knots by the cramps that followed his exertions, which could only be reduced by violent rubbing, and even that frequently failed to produce the desired effect. The spectators, who were convulsed with laughter while he was on the stage, little thought that while their applause was resounding through the house, he was suffering the most excruciating and horrible pains. But so it was until the twenty-fourth night of the piece, when he had no alternative, in consequence of his intense sufferings, but to throw up the part.

On the preceding night, although every possible remedy was tried, he could scarcely drag himself through the piece; and on this occasion it was only with the most extreme difficulty and by dint of extraordinary physical exertion and agony that he could conclude the performance, when he was carried to his dressing-room exhausted and powerless.

Here, when his bodily anguish had in some measure subsided, he began to reflect painfully and seriously on his sad condition. And when he remembered how long this illness had been hovering

about him, how gradually it had crept over his frame and subdued his energies, with what obstinacy it had baffled the skill of the most eminent medical professors, and how utterly his powers had wasted away beneath it, he came to the painful conviction that his professional existence was over. Suffering from this terrible certainty a degree of mental anguish to which all his bodily sufferings were as nothing, he covered his face with his hands and wept like a child. The next morning, he sent word to the theatre that he was disabled by illness from performing.

His son studied the part in one day, and played it that night with considerable success. The piece was performed forty-four nights during the season; but although he afterwards rallied a little, he never attempted to resume the part. In spite of all his sufferings, which were great, and a settled foreboding that his course was run, it was some years before hope deserted him: and, for a long time, from day to day he encouraged hopes of being at some future period able to resume the avocations in which he had spent his life.

Grimaldi repaired again, in the month of August, to Cheltenham, recollecting that it had had

some beneficial effect on his health in the previous year. During his stay, he so far recovered as to be enabled to play a few nights at the theatre, then under the management of Mr. Farley. Here he encountered Mr. Bunn, who informed him that Mr. Charles Kemble was then starring at Birmingham, and that Colonel Berkeley having promised to play for his benefit, he had come over to Cheltenham to ascertain what part the Colonel would wish to play. Mr. Bunn added, that he was there as much for the purpose of seeing Grimaldi as with any other object, as he wanted him to put a little money into both their purses by playing a few nights at Birmingham. Grimaldi declined at first, but, being pressed, and tempted by Mr. Bunn's offer, consented to act for two nights only, the receipts, whatever they might happen to be, to be divided between them.

It was Mr. Charles Kemble's benefit night when he and his son arrived at Birmingham; and as that gentleman was a great favourite there, as indeed he was everywhere throughout his brilliant career, Grimaldi entertained some fears that the circumstance would prove prejudicial to his interests. He sought a few moments' conversation with Mr.

Kemble in the course of the evening, and informed him that his son had received an offer of eight pounds per week from the Drury Lane Management, but that rather than he should leave Covent Garden Theatre, with which his father had now been connected so long, and where he had experienced so much liberality, he was ready to accept an engagement there at six pounds per week if agreeable to the proprietors.

"Joe," said Mr. Charles Kemble, "your offer is a very handsome one, and I agree to it at once. Your son is now engaged with us on the terms you have mentioned."

They shook hands and parted. Grimaldi strolled into the green-room, and there met Colonel Berkeley, who, after a short conversation, said that he very much wished to play Valentine to his Orson: to which Grimaldi replied, it would give him great pleasure to afford him the opportunity whenever he felt disposed.

"Very well," said Colonel Berkeley, "then we will consider the matter settled. As soon as you have done here, you must come to Cheltenham for one night. I will make all necessary arrange-

ments with Farley: your son shall play the Green Knight, and I will give you one hundred pounds as a remuneration. We will try what we can do together, Joe, to amuse the people."

Grimaldi had not intended to act again after his Birmingham engagement until the production of the Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden; but seeing that Colonel Berkeley was anxious to effect the arrangement, and feeling grateful for the liberality of his offer, he pledged himself without hesitation to accept his terms. The play was never done, however, by these three performers, for Grimaldi's theatrical career was over.

The night after Mr. Charles Kemble's benefit, Grimaldi produced a little pantomime of his own, called "Puck and the Puddings." The hit was so complete, and the sensation he excited so great, that he felt infinitely better than he had done for a long time, and was indeed so greatly restored that he was induced to accept an engagement for one additional night, the success of which equalled—it could not excel—that of the two previous evenings. When the curtain fell on the third night, Mr. Bunn presented him with 186*l.* 12*s.* as his share of the profits, accompanied with many

wishes for his speedy and perfect restoration to health, which Grimaldi himself, judging from his unwonted spirits and vigour, cheerfully hoped might be yet in store for him.

These hopes were never to be realised; the enthusiastic reception he had met with,—unusually enthusiastic, even for him,—had roused him for a brief period, and called forth all his former energies only to hasten their final prostration. With the exception of his two farewell benefits, this was his last appearance, his final exit from the boards he had trodden from a child, the last occasion of his calling forth those peals of merriment and approbation which, cheerfully as they sounded to him, had been surely ringing his death-knell for many years.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1823 to 1827.

His great afflictions augmented by the dissipation and recklessness of his Son.—He is compelled to retire from Covent Garden Theatre, and is succeeded by him.—New Speculation at Sadlers Wells.—Changes in the system of Management, and their results.—Sir James Scarlett and a blushing Witness.

From the period at which we have now arrived, down to within a year or so of his death, Grimaldi experienced little or nothing but one constant succession of afflictions and calamities, the pressure of which nearly bowed him to the earth; afflictions which it is painful to contemplate, and a detailed account of which would be neither instructive nor entertaining. A tale of unmitigated suffering, even when that suffering be mental, possesses but few attractions for the reader; but when, as in this case, a large portion of it is physical, it loses even the few attractions which the former would possess, and grows absolutely distasteful.

Bearing these circumstances in mind we shall follow Grimaldi's example in this particular, and study in the remaining pages of his life to touch as lightly as we can upon the heavy catalogue of his calamities, and to lay no unnecessary stress upon this cheerless portion of his existence.

Grimaldi slept at Birmingham the night after his closing performance, and on the following morning returned to Cheltenham, where he was attacked by a severe and alarming illness which for more than a month confined him to his bed, whence he rose at last a cripple for life.

Independent of these sufferings of the body, he had to encounter mental afflictions of no ordinary kind. He was devotedly attached to his son, who was his only child, for whom he had always entertained the most anxious solicitude, whom he had educated at a great expense, and upon whom a considerable portion of the earnings of his best days had been most liberally bestowed. Up to this time he had well repaid all the care and solicitude of his parents: he had risen gradually in the estimation of the public, had increased every year in prosperity, and still remained at home his father's friend and companion. It is

matter of pretty general notoriety that the young man ran a reckless and vicious course, and in time so shocked and disgusted even those who were merely brought into contact with him at the theatre for a few hours in a night, that it was found impossible to continue his engagements.

The first notification his father received of his folly and extravagance was during their stay at Cheltenham, when one morning, shortly after he had risen from his sick-bed, he was waited upon by one of the town authorities, who informed him that his son was then locked up for some drunken freaks committed over-night. He instantly paid everything that was demanded, and procured his release; but in some skirmish with the constables he had received a severe blow on the head from a staff, which, crushing his hat, alighted on the skull and inflicted a desperate wound. It is supposed that this unfortunate event disordered his intellects, as from that time, instead of the kind and affectionate son he had previously been, he became a wild and furious savage; he was frequently attacked with dreadful fits of epilepsy, and continually committed actions which nothing but madness could prompt. In 1828 he had a decided attack

of insanity, and was confined in a strait waistcoat in his father's house for some time. As no disorder of mind had appeared in him before, and as his miserable career may be dated from this time, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the wound he received at Cheltenham was among the chief causes of his short-lived delirium.

They returned to London together, and for the next three months Grimaldi consulted the most eminent medical men in the hope of recovering some portion of his lost health and strength. During that time he suffered an intensity of anxiety which it is difficult to conceive, as their final decision upon the remotest probability of his recovery was postponed from day to day. All their efforts were in vain, however. Towards the end of October he received a final intimation that it was useless for him to nourish any hope of recovering the use of his limbs, and that although nature, assisted by great care on his part and the watchfulness of his medical attendants, might certainly alleviate some of his severe pains, his final recovery was next to impossible, and he must make up his mind to relinquish every thought of resuming the exercise of his profession.

Among the gentlemen to whose kindness and attention he was greatly indebted in this stage of his trials, were, Sir Astley Cooper, Sir Matthew Tierney, Mr. Abernethy, Dr. Farr, Dr. Temple, Dr. Uwins, Dr. Mitchell, Mr. Thomas and Mr. James Wilson. To all these gentlemen he was personally unknown; but they all attended him gratuitously, and earnestly requested him to apply to them without reserve upon every occasion when it was at all likely that they could be of the slightest assistance.

It was with no slight despair that Grimaldi received the announcement that for the rest of his days he was a cripple, possibly the constant inmate of a sick-room, and that he had not even a distant prospect of resuming the occupations to which he had been attached from his cradle, and from which he was enabled up to this time to realise an annual income of fifteen hundred pounds: and all this without any private fortune or resources, with the exception of his shares in Sadlers Wells Theatre, which had hitherto proved a dead loss. For some hours after this opinion of his medical men had been communicated to him, he sat stupified with the heaviness of the calamity, and fell into a state of

extreme mental distress, from which it was a long time before he was thoroughly roused. As soon as he could begin to exercise his reason, he recollected that it was a duty he owed his employers to inform them of his inability to retain his situation at Covent Garden, the more especially as it was time they made some arrangements for the ensuing Christmas pantomime. Accordingly he sent a note to the theatre, acquainting them with his melancholy condition, and the impossibility of his fulfilling his articles, (which had only been entered into in the preceding January, and were for three years,) and recommending them to engage without loss of time some other individual to supply his place.

The communication was received with much kindness, and many good wishes for his recovery. After several interviews and much consideration, it was resolved that his son, J. S. Grimaldi, should be brought out as principal Clown in the ensuing Christmas pantomime. He appeared, for the first time in that character, in the pantomime of "Harlequin and Poor Robin, or the House that Jack built;" and his success was complete. His father sat in the front of the house on his first

night, and was no less gratified by his reception in public, than by the congratulations which poured upon him when he went round to the stage and found everybody delighted with the result of the trial. The pantomime proved very successful; it had an extended run, and the proprietors of the theatre, highly satisfied with the young man's success, with much liberality cancelled his existing articles, which were for 6*l.* per week, and entered into a new agreement by which they raised his salary to 8*l.* To Grimaldi also, they behaved in a most handsome manner; for although his regular salary was, as a matter of course, stopped from the day on which he communicated his inability to perform, they continued to allow him 5*l.* a week for the remainder of the season; an act of much consideration and kindness on their part, and a far greater token of their recollection of his services than he had ever expected to receive.

The three years for which Egerton had taken Sadlers Wells having now expired, he was requested by the proprietors to state what views he entertained as to retaining or giving up the property. It being found impossible to comply with his terms, and a Mr. Williams, who at that time

had the Surrey, having made an offer for the theatre, they agreed to let it to him for one season.

Soon after this agreement was entered into, Williams called upon Grimaldi one morning upon business, and in the course of the interview the latter inquired by what plan he proposed to make both theatres answer.

"Why, Mr. Grimaldi," replied Williams, "if two theatres could be kept open at the same expense as one, and the company equally—mind, I say *equally*—good, don't you think it very likely that the speculation would succeed?"

"Yes, I think it would," rejoined Grimaldi, doubtfully, for as yet he understood nothing of the manager's drift; "I think it would."

"And so do I," said the other; "and that's the way I mean to manage. I mean to work the two theatres with one and the same company: I mean to employ one half the company in the earlier part of the evening at Sadlers Wells, and then to transfer them to the Surrey, to finish there; — at that theatre I shall do precisely the same: and I am now having carriages built

expressly to convey them backwards and forwards."

This system, which has since been tried (without the carriages) at the two great houses, was actually put in practice. On Easter Monday 1824, the carriages began to run, and the two seasons commenced. The speculation turned out, as Grimaldi had anticipated, a dead failure: the lessee lost some money himself, and got greatly into debt with the proprietors; upon which, fearing to increase their losses, they took measures to recover possession of the theatre. When they obtained it, they were obliged to finish the season themselves; by which, as they had never contemplated such a proceeding, and had made no preparations for it, they sustained a very considerable loss.

In this year Grimaldi was much troubled by pecuniary matters, and the conduct of his son. He was living on the few hundred pounds he had put by, selling out his stock, spending the proceeds, and consequently rising every morning a poorer man. His son, who had now a good salary and was rising in his profession, suddenly left his home, and, to the heart-rending grief of his

father and mother, abandoned himself to every species of wild debauchery and riot. His father wrote him, imploring him to return, and offering to make every arrangement that could conduce to his comfort; but he never answered the letter, and kept on his headlong course. This shock was a heavy one indeed, and, in Grimaldi's weak and debilitated state, almost broke his heart.

For four years Grimaldi never saw any more of his son, save occasionally on the stage of Sadlers Wells, where he was engaged at a salary of five pounds per week; or when he met him in the street, when the son would cross over the road to get out of the way. Nor during all this time did he receive a single line from him, except once in 1825. He had written to the young man, describing the situation to which he was reduced and the poverty with which he was threatened, reminding him that between the two theatres he was now earning thirteen pounds per week, and requesting his assistance with some pecuniary aid. To this application he at first returned no reply; but several of Grimaldi's friends having expressed a very strong opinion to him on the subject, he at length returned the following note:—

"Dear Father,

"At present I am in difficulties; but as long as I have a shilling you shall have half."

This assurance looked well enough upon paper, but had no other merit, for he never sent his father a farthing, nor did he again see him, (save that he volunteered his services at his two farewell benefits,) until he came to his door one night in 1828, and hardily claimed shelter and food.

In 1825 the proprietors of Sadlers Wells resolved to open the theatre on their joint account, with which view they secured the services of Mr. T. Dibdin as acting-manager. It was determined at a meeting of proprietors, that it would be advantageous to the property if one of their number were resident on the premises, to assist Mr. Dibdin and regulate the expenditure. As Grimaldi had nothing to do, it was proposed in the kindest manner by Mr. Jones, one of the shareholders, that he should fill the situation at a salary of four pounds per week. It need scarcely be said that he accepted this proposal with great gratitude. They commenced the season with much spirit, turning the old dwelling-house partly into

wine-rooms according to the old fashion, and partly into a saloon, box-office, and passages. The dresses of the opening piece were of a gorgeous description, and every new play was got up with the same magnificence. They also determined to take half-price, which had never before been done at that house, and to play the twelve months through, instead of confining the season to six; this last resolution originating in the immense growth of the neighbourhood around the theatre, which in Grimaldi's time had gradually been transformed from a pretty suburban spot into the maze of streets and squares and closely-clustered houses which it now presents. These arrangements were all very extensive and speculative; but they overstepped the bounds of moderation in point of expense, and the season ended with a loss of 1,400*l.*

Next year they pursued a different plan, and reduced their expenditure in every department. This reduction was superintended by Grimaldi, and the very first salary he cut down was his own, from which he struck off at once two pounds per week. They tried pony-races too in the area attached to the theatre, and, (so variable is thea-

trical property,) cleared a sum equal to their losses of the preceding year, between Easter and Whitsuntide alone. The following season was also a successful one, and at length he began to think he should gain something by the proprietorship.

It was about this time, or rather before, that Grimaldi was subpœnaed as a witness in an action between two theatrical gentlemen, of whom Mr. Glossop was one, when his smart parrying of a remark from a counsel engaged in the case occasioned much laughter in court.

On his name being called and his appearing in the witness-box, there was some movement in the court, which was very crowded, the people being anxious to catch a sight of a witness whose name was so familiar. Sir James Scarlett, who was to examine him, rose as he made his appearance, and, looking at him with great real or apparent interest, said, "Dear me! Pray, sir, are you the great Mr. Grimaldi, formerly of Covent Garden Theatre?"

The witness felt greatly confused at this inquiry, especially as it seemed to excite to a still higher pitch the curiosity of the spectators. He

reddened slightly and replied, " I used to be a pantomime actor, sir, at Covent Garden Theatre."

" Yes," said Sir James Scarlett, " I recollect you well. You are a very clever man, sir." He paused for a few seconds, and, looking up in his face, said,

" And so you really are Grimaldi, are you ?"

This was more embarrassing than the other question, and Grimaldi feeling it so, fidgetted about in the box, and grew redder and redder.

" Don't blush, Mr. Grimaldi, pray don't blush ; there is not the least occasion for blushing," said Sir James Scarlett.

" I don't blush, sir," rejoined the witness.

" I assure you, you need not blush so."

" I beg your pardon, sir, I really am not blushing," repeated the witness, who beginning to grow angry, repeated it with so red a face, that the spectators tittered aloud.

" I assure you, Mr. Grimaldi," said Sir James Scarlett, smiling, " that you *are* blushing violently."

" I beg your pardon, sir," replied Grimaldi, " but you really are quite mistaken. The flush

which you observe on my face, is a *Scarlet* one, I admit; but I assure you that it is nothing more than a reflection from your own."

The people in the court shouted with laughter, and Sir James Scarlett joining in their mirth, proceeded without further remark with the business of the case.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1828.

Great kindness of Miss Kelly towards Grimaldi.—His farewell benefit at Sadlers Wells; last appearance, and farewell address.—He makes preparations for one more appearance at Covent Garden, but, in a conversation with Mr. Charles Kemble, meets with a disappointment.—In consequence of Lord Segrave's benevolent interference, a benefit is arranged for him at Drury Lane.—His last interview with Mr. Charles Kemble and Fawcett.

In February 1828, a very highly-esteemed and kind friend to Grimaldi, and an actress of deserved popularity, whose wonderful talents have gained for her universal praise and an ample fortune, and whose performances have been for many years the delight and admiration of the public — Miss Kelly,—called at his house to inquire after his health, and to ascertain whether it was probable that he would ever again be enabled to appear upon the stage. He replied, with natural emotion,

that he could no longer dare even to hope that he should ever act more.

"Then," asked Miss Kelly, "why not take a farewell benefit? I dare say you are not so rich as to despise the proceeds of such an undertaking."

Grimaldi shook his head, and replying that he was much poorer than anybody supposed, proceeded to lay before her his exact situation, not omitting to point out, that whenever Sadlers Wells was again let by the proprietors, he would certainly lose his situation, and thus be deprived of his sole dependance. As to taking a benefit, he said, he felt so ill and depressed, that he could not venture to undergo the labour of getting one up, far less would his pecuniary means warrant his incurring the chance of a loss.

"Leave it all to me," said Miss Kelly, "and I'll arrange pretty nearly everything for you without a moment's loss of time. There must be two benefits one at Sadlers Wells, and the other at Covent Garden. The former benefit must take place first, so you go and consult the proprietors upon the subject at once, and I'll lose no time in furthering your interests elsewhere."

The promptitude and decision which Miss

Kelly so kindly evinced, infused something of a similar spirit into the invalid. He promised that he would see the proprietors immediately; and, in spite of a severe attack of spasms, which almost deprived him of speech, went that same night to Sadlers Wells, and stated his intention to take a farewell benefit. He was received with the greatest friendship and liberality; they at once entered into his views, and gave an unanswerable proof of the sincerity with which they did so, by offering him the use of the house gratuitously. Monday, March the 17th, was fixed for the occasion; and no sooner was it known decidedly when the benefit was to take place, than Mr. T. Dibdin assembling the company, acquainted them with the circumstance, and suggested that their offering to play gratuitously would be both a well-timed compliment and a real assistance. The hint was no sooner given than it was most cheerfully responded to; the performers immediately proffered their services, the band did the same, and every person in the theatre was anxious and eager to render every assistance in his or her power, and to "put their shoulders to the wheel, in behalf of poor old Joe."

The following is a copy of the bill of performance put forth on this occasion:—

SADLERS WELLS.

MR. GRIMALDI'S NIGHT,

And Last Appearance at this Theatre.

Monday, March 17, 1828.

"It is most respectfully announced that Mr. Grimaldi, from severe and incessant indisposition, which has oppressed him upwards of four years and continues without any hope of amelioration, finds himself compelled to quit a profession in which, from almost infancy, he has been honoured with as great a share of patronage and indulgence as ever fell to the lot of any candidate for public favour. Nor can he quit a theatre where his labours commenced, and were for so many years sanctioned, without attempting the honour of personally expressing his gratitude; and however inadequate he may prove to paint the sincerity of his feelings, it is his intention to offer an address of thanks to his friends and patrons, and conclude his services with the painful duty of bidding them

"FAREWELL.

"The entertainments will commence with the

successful romance of 'Sixes, or the Fiend;' Hock (a drunken prisoner) by Mr. Grimaldi. After which, the favourite burletta of 'Humphrey Clinker;' to which will be added the popular farce of 'Wives and Partners;' and the whole to conclude with a grand Masquerade on the stage, in the course of which several novelties will be presented: Mr. Blackmore on the *corde volante;* Mr. Walbourn's dance as Dusty Bob; Mr. Campbell's song of 'Bound 'Prentice to a Waterman;' Mrs. Searle's skipping-rope dance; Mr. Payne's juggling evolutions; and the celebrated dance between Mr. J. S. Grimaldi and Mr. Ellar. After which, Mr. Grimaldi will deliver his farewell address: and the whole will conclude with a brilliant display of fireworks, expressive of

"GRIMALDI'S THANKS."

The house was crowded to suffocation on the night. He performed the trifling part for which he had been announced in the first piece with considerable difficulty but immense approbation, and in the stage of the performances in which it was announced in the bills of the day, came forward to deliver his Farewell Address, which ran thus:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—I appear before you this evening for the last time at this theatre. Doubtless, there are many persons present who think that I am a very aged man: I have now an opportunity of convincing them to the contrary. I was born on the 18th of December 1779, and, consequently, on the 18th of last December attained the age of forty-eight.

"At a very early age — before that of three years, I was introduced to the public by my father at this theatre; and ever since that period have I held a situation in this establishment. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, I have been engaged at this theatre for five-and-forty years.

"By strict attention, perseverance, and exertion, did I arrive at the height of my profession, and, proud I am to acknowledge, have ofttimes been honoured with your smiles, approbation, and support. It is now three years since I have taken a regular engagement, owing to extreme and dangerous indisposition: with patience have I waited in hopes my health might once more be re-established, and I again meet your smiles as before;— but, I regret to say, there is little, or, in fact, no improvement perceivable, and it would therefore

now be folly in me ever to think of again returning to my professional duties. I could not, however, leave this theatre without returning my grateful thanks to my friends and patrons, and the public; and now do I venture to offer them, secure in the conviction that they will not be slighted or deemed utterly unworthy of acceptance.

"To the proprietors of this theatre, the performers, the gentlemen of the band—in fact, to every individual connected with it, I likewise owe and offer my sincere thanks for their assistance upon this evening. And now, ladies and gentlemen, it only remains for me to utter one dreadful word, ere I depart—Farewell!—God bless you all! may you and your families ever enjoy the blessings of health and happiness!—Farewell!"

He was received and listened to, in the kindest and most encouraging manner; but his spirits met with so severe a shock in bidding a formal farewell to his friends, that he did not entirely recover from the effects of it for some days, and so completely dreaded going through a similar ordeal at Covent Garden, that had not Miss Kelly kept him firm to the task, he would have abandoned

his intention with regard to the latter place altogether.

The receipts of this benefit were 230*l.*; but he received a great number of anonymous letters, containing remittances, which amounted in the whole to 85*l.* more; so that he cleared by the night's performance a total of 315*l.*, which was a well-timed and most fortunate assistance to him.

Some short time after this evening, Mr. T. Dibdin left Sadlers Wells. He was succeeded in the capacity of stage-manager by Mr. Campbell, who retained the situation with credit to himself and satisfaction to the proprietors for several years: remaining in it, in fact, until the establisment was again let.

On the 25th of March, being a little recovered, and having at last made up his mind to take the second benefit, Grimaldi walked to Covent Garden, and having been warmly welcomed by the performers, went to Mr. Charles Kemble's room, and was received by him in the most friendly manner.

"Well, Joe," said he, "I hope you have come to say that you feel able to be with us again?"

"Indeed, my dear sir, it is unfortunately quite

the reverse ; for I am come to tell you that I never shall act more."

" I am very sorry to hear you say so, Joe; I had been in hopes it would be otherwise," returned Mr. Kemble.

" We have known each other a good many years, sir," said Grimaldi.

" We have indeed, Joe,—many years !"

" And I think, sir," continued Grimaldi, " that if it were in your power, you would willingly serve me?"

" Try, me, Joe, try me !"

He then stated his intention of taking a farewell benefit at Covent Garden, and requested Mr. Kemble's assistance in obtaining the use of the house if possible at a low price ; but if not, then upon the usual terms.

Mr. Kemble listened until he had finished, and said, " My dear Joe, I perfectly understand you ; and if the theatre were solely mine, I should say ' Take it — 'tis yours, and without charge at all:' but, unfortunately, our theatre is in Chancery, and nothing can be done without the consent of others. However, Joe, the proprietors meet every Tuesday, and I will mention it to them. So after Tuesday you shall hear from me."

He thanked Mr. Kemble, and they parted. He awaited the arrival of the day fixed in great anxiety; but it came and passed, and so did another Tuesday, and several more days, without any intelligence arriving to relieve his suspense. Seeing it announced in the papers that Mr. Kemble was about to proceed to Edinburgh, to act there, he wrote a note to him, reminding him of what had passed between them, and requesting a reply. This was on the 13th of April. In the evening of the same day he received an answer, not from Mr. Kemble himself, but from Mr. Robertson, the respected treasurer of the theatre, which ran thus:

"Dear Sir,

"I am directed by the proprietors of this theatre to acquaint you, in reply to your application relative to a benefit, that they much regret that the present situation of the theatre with regard to Chancery proceedings will prevent the possibility of their accommodating your wishes."

The contents of this letter, of course greatly disappointed and vexed Grimaldi, who remembering the number of years he had been connected with the theatre, and the great favourite he

had been with the public, could not help deeming it somewhat harsh and unkind conduct on the part of the proprietors to refuse him the house for one night, for which of course he would have paid.

Mr. Price was the lessee of Drury Lane at this time, and once or twice Grimaldi thought of applying to him, but fearing it would be useless, dismissed the idea. In this state of indecision two or three weeks passed away, when one day he received a note from Mr. Dunn, the Drury Lane treasurer, requesting him to attend at the theatre at twelve o'clock next day, as Mr. Price wished to see him. On complying with this very unexpected invitation, he was informed by Mr. Dunn, that the lessee had been compelled to meet another party on business, and therefore could not wait to see him; but that he was deputed to say, that he had been apprised of Grimaldi's wish to take a benefit, and that the theatre was at his service for the evening of Friday, June 27th, 1828, the last night but one of the season. "That," added Mr. Dunn, "is unfortunately the only evening we can offer you. Had Mr. Price known earlier of your wishes, you would have had an extended

choice of nights, and he would have felt happy in obliging so distinguished a veteran."

Much delighted with this politeness and consideration, he gratefully accepted the theatre for the night mentioned. He was much puzzled at the time to think who could have mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Price, and befriended him so greatly; on mature consideration, however, he had little doubt that it was Lord Segrave, to whom he was obliged, for when he told Miss Kelly that he had been offered Drury Lane, she remembered Lord Segrave having expressed great surprise when she told him he had been refused Covent Garden, and his having added, that "he should see Price shortly."

Every assistance that could be afforded him in arranging his benefit was cheerfully rendered. To three gentlemen in particular, for the valuable and cordial aid they rendered to the indefatigable exertions of Miss Kelly, he was under deep and lasting obligations. These were, Mr. James Wallack, Mr. W. Barrymore, and Mr. Peake, scarcely less a favourite with the public than with the members of the profession, to the literature of which his abilities and humour have been long and successfully devoted.

About the middle of June, hearing that Mr. Charles Kemble had returned from the North, Grimaldi resolved to call upon him, and to thank him for the exertions which he felt assured he had made relative to his benefit. He had another object in view, — which was, to apprise him that he had entered into engagements of a satisfactory nature at Drury Lane; which intelligence he hoped would afford him unmitigated satisfaction, after the strong desire he had always expressed for his prosperity.

Mr. Charles Kemble was alone when Grimaldi was shown up to his room; he said, that having recently heard Mr. Kemble had returned from Scotland, he had determined to lose no time in calling to thank him for the exertions which he had no doubt he had made to enable him to take a benefit at Covent Garden. Although his kindness had been unavailing, he was anxious to assure him that he perfectly appreciated it. He then went on to say, that Mr. Price had in the handsomest manner offered the use of Drury Lane Theatre, at which he was to take a benefit on the 27th; and that he had every reason to believe, from the interest which was making for him, that it would be a very great one.

Mr. Kemble was evidently surprised to hear this, and instead of manifesting the gratification which Grimaldi had expected, evinced feelings of a directly opposite nature. At length he exclaimed, "Take a benefit at Drury Lane!"

"Yes, sir," replied Grimaldi; "and knowing that you feel a great interest in my success, I have called upon you to thank you for all your past kindness, and to inform you what I intend doing on my farewell night."

With these words, he placed in Mr. Kemble's hands an announce bill, of which we subjoin a copy. These bills were afterwards recalled, for reasons which will presently appear.

"THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

"MR. GRIMALDI'S LAST APPEARANCE IN PUBLIC,

"On Friday, June 27, 1828.

"It is respectfully announced, that Mr. Grimaldi, after more than four years of severe and unremitting indisposition, which continues without hope of alleviation, is compelled, finally, to relinquish a profession in which, from infancy, he has been honoured with as liberal a share of public patronage as ever has been accorded to candidates of much higher pretensions.

" Numerous patrons having expressed surprise that Mr. Grimaldi's benefit did not take place at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, he takes the liberty of stating, that after bidding farewell to his friends and supporters at Sadlers Wells, (the scene of his favoured exertions from the early age of three years,) he applied to the present directors of Covent Garden Theatre, who, in the kindest manner, expressed their regret that the well-known situation of the theatre precluded the possibility of indulging their strong inclination to comply with the request he had ventured to prefer. On transferring the application to Mr. Price, the lessee of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Mr. Grimaldi has the pleasure to say, that it was acceded to with a celerity which enhanced the obligation, and demands his most sincere acknowledgment.

" Mr. Grimaldi made his first appearance at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, where he continued twenty-four years, and, but for a very trifling misunderstanding, might have retained his engagement to the present time: it is, however, most grateful to his feelings to finish his public labours on the spot where they commenced, and where for

nearly a quarter of a century his exertions were fostered by public indulgence, and stimulated by public applause.

"To many anxious friends who, from a genuine spirit of good-will, have inquired the cause why, during so long a period of professional exertion, Mr. Grimaldi has not been able to realise a competency that might have precluded the necessity of this appeal, he can only plead the expenses attendant on infirmities, produced by exhausting and laborious duties, the destructive burthen of which were felt some years before he finally yielded to their pressure, and which at length compelled him to relax his exertions at the period when ability to continue them would have insured him a comfortable independence. However inadequate he may prove to the painful yet pleasing endeavour to express personally his gratitude on the night of his retreat, it is his intention to offer an address of thanks, in which, though mere words may not be equal to paint the depth and sincerity of his feelings, he will hope to gain credit for the heartfelt sensation of dutiful respect which accompanies his last farewell."

Mr. Kemble read the bill through very atten-

tively, and laid it gently upon the table without saying a word, but still looking very much displeased. Grimaldi, not knowing very well what to say, remained silent, and nothing was said for a minute or two, when Fawcett entered the room.

"Here, Fawcett," said Mr. Kemble, "here's a bill for you: read that."

Fawcett read it in profound silence, and when he had done so, looked as if he could not at all understand what was going forward, or what he ought to do. At length he asked what he was to infer from it, and Mr. Kemble was about to reply, when Grimaldi interrupted him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but if Mr. Fawcett is to be appealed to in this business, it is but just that before he expresses any opinion upon it, he should understand all the circumstances."

With this, he proceeded to detail them as briefly as he could. When he had finished, Mr. Kemble said, with an air of great vexation, "Why did you not say, that if you could not take a benefit here, you would do so at the other house? I declare you should have had a night for nothing, sooner than you should have gone there."

Although this remark was very unexpected, Grimaldi made no further reply than that he had never thought of applying to Mr. Price, but that that gentleman, he presumed at the solicitation of some unknown friend, had made an offer to him; he then begged Mr. Fawcett, as he now knew all, to express his opinion upon the matter.

"Why really," said that gentleman, "had I been situated as Grimaldi has been, I should certainly have acted as he has done. If one theatre could not accommodate me and another could, I should feel no hesitation in accepting an offer from the latter. However," added Mr. Fawcett, after this very manly and straightforward avowal, "I think it would be best, Grimaldi, and I hope you will take my advice, not to send out this bill. It might be deemed offensive, and cannot, as I see, be productive of any good whatever."

Grimaldi thanked him, and expressed his intention of acting upon his opinion. Addressing Mr. Kemble, he said, that from what had just before fallen from him, it appeared that if he had thought proper, he (Grimaldi) might have

had Covent Garden for his benefit, even gratuitously; but that presuming he had not the power of taking a benefit at Drury-lane, he had refused him, which was not the conduct of a friend, and was very unlike the treatment he had expected to receive. He then left the room, and never saw either gentleman again.

Upon cool reflection he was inclined to consider that Mr. Kemble had some private and very good reasons, arising out of the management of the theatre, for acting as he had done, which there is little doubt was the case, as he could have had neither the intention nor the wish to injure a man whom he invariably treated with kindness and courtesy.

The stage has now lost the services of both these gentlemen. Poor Fawcett died some time since, and Mr. Charles Kemble has retired from the boards of which he was so long, both from his public and private character, a shining ornament.

CHAPTER XXV.

The farewell benefit at Drury Lane.—Grimaldi's Last appearance and parting address.—The Drury Lane Theatrical Fund, and its prompt reply to his communication.—Miserable career and death of his Son. —His wife dies, and he returns from Woolwich (whither he had previously removed) to London.— His retirement.

1828 to 1836.

The three gentlemen who were mentioned in conjunction with Miss Kelly, in the course of the last chapter, exerted themselves with so much energy, that Grimaldi's benefit far exceeded his most sanguine expectations. In addition to the most effective company of the theatre, were secured the services of Miss Kelly, and Madam Fearon, Miss Fanny Ayton, Miss Love, Matthews, Keeley, and Bartley, besides an immense number of pantomime performers, who crowded to offer their aid, and among whom were—Barnes, Southby, Ridgway and his two sons, and young Grimaldi. Mr. James Wallack arranged every-

thing, and exerted himself as much as he could have done if the night had been his own. The announced bill ran thus :—

Mr. GRIMALDI'S FAREWELL BENEFIT.

On Friday, June 27th, 1828,

will be performed,

JONATHAN IN ENGLAND ;

after which

A MUSICAL MELANGE.

To be succeeded by

THE ADOPTED CHILD,

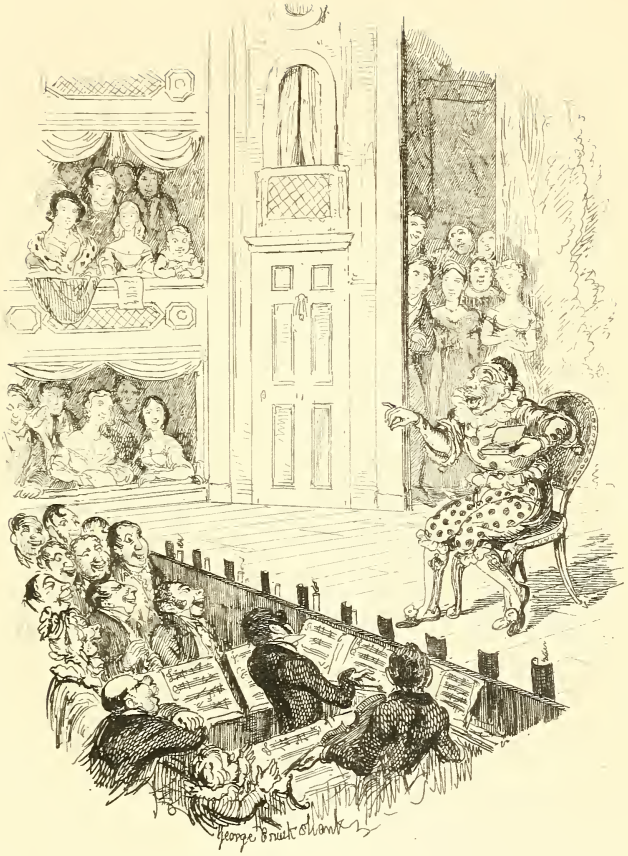
and concluded with

HARLEQUIN HOAX,

In which Mr. Grimaldi will act clown in one scene, sing a song, and speak his

FAREWELL ADDRESS.

It was greatly in favour of the benefit, that Covent Garden had closed the night before ; the pit and galleries were completely filled in less than half an hour after opening the doors, the boxes were very good from the first, and at half-price were as crowded as the other parts of the house. In the last piece Grimaldi acted one scene, but being wholly unable to stand, went


George Cruikshank

through it seated upon a chair. Even in this distressing condition he retained enough of his old humour to succeed in calling down repeated shouts of merriment and laughter. The song too, in theatrical language, "went" as well as ever; and at length, when the pantomime approached its termination, he made his appearance before the audience in his private dress, amidst thunders of applause. As soon as silence could be obtained, and he could muster up sufficient courage to speak, he advanced to the foot lights, and delivered, as well as his emotions would permit, the following Farewell Address.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—In putting off the clown's garment, allow me to drop also the clown's taciturnity, and address you in a few parting sentences. I entered early on this course of life, and leave it prematurely. Eight-and-forty years only have passed over my head—but I am going as fast down the hill of life as that older Joe—John Anderson. Like vaulting ambition, I have overleaped myself, and pay the penalty in an advanced old age. If I have now any aptitude for tumbling, it is through bodily infirmity, for I am worse on my feet than I used to be on

my head. It is four years since I jumped my last jump—filched my last oyster—boiled my last sausage—and set in for retirement. Not quite so well provided for, I must acknowledge, as in the days of my clownship, for then, I dare say, some of you remember, I used to have a fowl in one pocket and sauce for it in the other.

"To night has seen me assume the motley for a short time—it clung to my skin as I took it off, and the old cap and bells rang mournfully as I quitted them for ever.

"With the same respectful feelings as ever, do I find myself in your presence—in the presence of my last audience—this kindly assemblage so happily contradicting the adage that a favourite has no friends. For the benevolence that brought you hither—accept, ladies and gentlemen, my warmest and most grateful thanks, and believe, that of one and all, Joseph Grimaldi takes a double leave, with a farewell on his lips, and a tear in his eyes.

"Farewell! that you and yours may ever enjoy that greatest earthly good—health, is the sincere wish of your faithful and obliged servant. God bless you all!"

It was with no trifling difficulty that Grimaldi reached the conclusion of this little speech, although the audience cheered loudly, and gave him every possible expression of encouragement and sympathy. When he had finished, he still stood in the same place, bewildered and motionless, his feelings being so greatly excited, that the little power illness had left, wholly deserted him. In this condition he stood for a minute or two, when Mr. Harley, who was at the side scene, commiserating his emotion, kindly advanced and led him off the stage, assisted by his son. As a token of his respect and gratitude, Grimaldi took off a new wig which he wore on the occasion, and presented it to Mr. Harley, together with the original address, which he had held in his hand. Our friend has them both, carefully preserved in a small museum of wigs, autographs, portraits, and other memorials of the most distinguished men in every branch of the profession, of which, for upwards of 20 years he has been deservedly one of the most popular members.

Having been led into a private room, and strengthened with a couple of glasses of Ma-

deira, Grimaldi had to sustain another, and a scarcely less severe trial, in receiving the farewells and good wishes of all his old associates. The street was thronged with people, who were waiting to see him come out, and as he entered the coach, which stood at the stage-door, gave him three hearty cheers, amid which he drove off. But all was not over yet, for hundreds followed the vehicle until it reached his house, and upon getting out he was again hailed with a similar overwhelming shout of approbation and regard; nor could the crowd be prevailed upon to disperse until he had appeared on the top of the steps, and made his farewell bow.

Grimaldi was too exhausted and nervous, after the trying scenes through which he had just passed, to make any calculation that night of what the benefit had produced; but the next day, being somewhat recovered, he entered into the matter, and found the result to be as follows:—The house cost him 210*l.*, the printing 70*l.* more, making the expenses 280*l.* The money taken at the doors amounted to rather more than 400*l.*, besides which he sold 150*l.* worth of tickets, making a total of 550*l.* Deducting the expenses, the clear profits of the benefit amounted to 270*l.*

There was another source of great profit, which must not be forgotten, namely, the number of anonymous communications Grimaldi received, enclosing sums of money, and wishing him a happy retirement. He received six letters, each containing 20*l.*, eleven containing 10*l.*, and sixteen containing 5*l.* each. Thus, the amount forwarded by unknown hands was no less than 310*l.*, which, added to the amount of profits just mentioned, makes a gross sum realized by this last benefit of 580*l.*, besides the 315*l.* which he had cleared at Sadlers Wells.

The highest tribute that can be paid to those who in secret forwarded their munificent donations, or to those who rendered him their valuable professional assistance, or to that large number who came forward to cheer the last public moments of a man who had so often, and so successfully, beguiled their leisure hours, is, that they smoothed the hard bed of premature and crippled old age, and rendered the slow decline of a life, scarcely in years past its prime, peaceful and contented. This benefit closed his theatrical existence, and filled his heart with deep and lasting emotions of gratitude.

Only one more circumstance connected with Grimaldi's theatrical existence remains to be told, and to that one we most anxiously and emphatically invite the attention of all who admire the drama, (and what man of thought or feeling does not?)—of all those who devote themselves to the cause of real charity,—and of all those who now, reaping large gains from the exercise of a glittering and dazzling profession, forget that youth and strength will not last for ever, and that the more intoxicating their triumphs now, the more probable is the advent of a time of adversity and decay.

Counting over his gains, and dwelling upon his helpless state, Grimaldi was not long in finding that even now, whenever his little salary at Sadlers Wells should cease, he would not have adequate means of support. There was only one source to which he could apply for relief, and to that source he at once turned.

It is well known to all our readers, that two charitable societies exist in London, called the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatrical Funds. They are distinct bodies, but were established with the same great and benevolent

object. Every actor who, throughout his engagement at either of the large theatres, contributes a certain portion of his earnings to one of these funds, is entitled, if he should ever be reduced to the necessity of seeking it, to an annuity in proportion to the time for which he has contributed. To one of these most excellent institutions,—the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund,—Grimaldi had belonged for more than thirty years, promoting its interests not merely by his subscription, but by every means in his power. Feeling that in his hour of need and distress he had some claim upon its funds, he addressed the secretary, and stated the situation to which he was reduced. Early on the following morning he was visited by the gentleman to whom he had applied, who informed him that he was awarded a pension of 100*l.* a-year for the remainder of his life, and that he was deputed to pay him immediately the amount of one quarter in advance. His fears vanished at once, and he felt that want at all events could never be his portion.

It can be observed at no better place than this, that all application for relief from these

funds are known only to the respective committees, and that the names of all annuitants are kept strictly secret during their lives; that the distribution of their property is confided to gentlemen accustomed to act with the utmost delicacy and discrimination, and that some of the greatest ornaments of the English stage have been relieved in their old age, when their powers of amusing and delighting were gone,—not as poor pensioners, or objects of compassion, but as persons who, not forgetting their poor brethren in their affluence, were not themselves forgotten, when unexpected misfortune or sickness fell upon them.

The unfortunate young man to whom allusion has been frequently made in the course of the last few pages, was, as may easily be imagined, one of the chief sources of Grimaldi's care and trouble in his latter days. After remaining in his house for two months in a state of madness, he grew better, left one night to attend Sadlers Wells, where he was engaged, and was seen no more until the middle of the following year, when he again presented himself in a state of insanity, and was conveyed to his own lodgings

and carefully tended. The next year he was dismissed from Sadlers Wells on account of his dissolute conduct, engaged at Drury Lane with a salary of eight pounds per week, most favourably received, and discharged at the end of the first season for his profligacy and drunkenness.

After this, he obtained an engagement for a month at the Pavilion in Whitechapel Road, but left that theatre also in disgrace, and fell into the lowest stage of wretchedness and poverty. His dress had fallen to rags, his feet were thrust into two worn-out slippers, his face was pale with disease, and squalid with dirt and want, and he was steeped in degradation. The man who might have earned with ease, with comfort and respectability, from six to seven hundred pounds a year, and have raised himself to far greater gains by common providence and care, was reduced to such a dreadful state of destitution and filth, that even his own parents could scarcely recognise him.

He was again received, and again found a home with his sick father. At Christmas 1829, he obtained a situation at the coburg, through the kindness of Davidge, and there he remained

until Easter, 1830, when he took the benefit of the Insolvent Debtors' Act, to relieve himself from the creditors who were hunting him down. His support in prison and contingent expenses, amounting to forty pounds, were all paid by his father.

He next accepted an engagement at Edinburgh, which turned out a failure; and another at Manchester, at Christmas, 1830, by which he gained a few pounds. He then returned to the Coburg, where he might have almost permanently remained, but for his own misconduct, which once again cast him on the world.

In the following autumn, the son again presented himself at his father's door, reduced to a state of beggary and want not to be described. His mother, who had suffered greatly from his misdeeds, outrageous conduct, and gross and violent abuse, besought his father not to receive him, or aid him again, remembering how much he had already wasted the small remnant of his means only to minister to his extravagance and folly. But he could not witness his helpless and miserable state without compassion, and he was once more forgiven,

once more became an inmate of the house, and remained there in a state of utter dependence.

In 1832, Sadlers Wells was let for one season to Mrs. Fitzwilliam and Mr. W. H. Williams. They retained Grimaldi for some little time, but finding that he must be dismissed very shortly, he made preparations for meeting the consequent reduction of his income, by giving up the house in which he had lived for several years, and taking a cottage at Woolwich, whither he had an additional inducement to retire, in the hope that change of air might prove beneficial to his wife, who had already been ill for some time.

They repaired to their new house in the latter end of September, and in the beginning of November the son received a letter from a brother actor, entreating him to perform for a benefit, at Sadlers Wells. His reception was so cordial and his acting so good, that on the very same evening, notwithstanding all that had previously passed, he was offered an engagement for the ensuing Christmas at the Coburg, and the next day, on his return to Woolwich, he communicated the intelligence. The following day was his birth-

day,—he completed his thirtieth year that morning,—and before it had passed over, the then lessee of the Queen's Theatre waited upon him, and offered him an engagement for a short time at a weekly salary of 4*l*. He agreed to take it, and arranged to begin on the following Monday, November 25, in a part called Black Cæsar.

It was sorely against his father's will that he went to fulfil this engagement, for his health had been waning for some time, and he was fearful that he might relapse into his old habits. However, he was determined to go, and borrowing some money of his father, as was his usual wont, he left Woolwich on the Sunday morning.

On the Wednesday Grimaldi had occasion to go to town, and eagerly embraced it as an opportunity for seeing his son, to whom, despite all the anxiety and losses he had caused him, he was still most tenderly attached. He wrote to him, naming the friend's house at which he would be found, and the young man came. He looked in excellent health—was in high spirits, and boasted of his success in terms which from all

accounts it appeared were justified by its extent. Shortly after dinner he left, observing that, as he had to appear in the first scene of the first piece, he had no time to lose. His father never saw him more.

Grimaldi returned to Woolwich next day, and anxiously hoped on Sunday to see the misguided man to dinner, agreeably to a promise he had made. The day passed away, but he did not come; a few more days elapsed, and then he received an intimation from a stranger that his son was ill. He immediately wrote to a friend, (Mr. Glendinning the printer,) requesting him to ascertain the nature of his indisposition, which he feared was only the effect of some new intemperance, and if it should appear necessary, to procure him medical assistance. For two days he heard nothing; but this did not alarm him, for he entertained no doubt that his son's illness would disappear when the fumes of the liquor he had drunk had evaporated.

On the 11th of December a friend came to his house as he was sitting by his wife's bed, to which she was confined by illness, and when, with much difficulty, he had descended to the

parlour, told him with great care and delicacy that his son was dead.

In one instant every feeling of decrepitude or bodily weakness left him, his limbs recovered their original vigour, all his lassitude and debility vanished, a difficulty of breathing under which he had long laboured disappeared, and starting from his seat he rushed to his wife's chamber, tearing, without the smallest difficulty, up a flight of stairs, which a quarter of an hour before it had taken him ten minutes to climb. He hurried to her bed-side, told her that her son was dead, heard her first passionate exclamation of grief, and, falling into a chair, was once again an enfeebled and crippled old man.

The remains of the young man were interred, a few days afterwards, in the burial-ground of Whitfield's Tabernacle, in Tottenham Court Road; but some circumstances, apparently of a suspicious nature, being afterwards rumoured about, and it being whispered that marks of blows had been seen upon his head by those who laid him out, an inquest was holden upon the young man's body. Gri-

maldi states that the body was exhumed; from some passages in the newspapers of the day it would appear that an informal inquest was held, and that the body was not disinterred. Be this as it may, it was proved before the coroner that his death had arisen from the natural consequences of a mis-spent life; that his body was covered with a fearful inflammation, and that he had died in a state of wild and furious madness, rising from his bed and dressing himself in stage costume to act snatches of the parts to which he had been most accustomed, and requiring to be held down to die, by strong manual force. This closing scene of his life took place at a public house in Pitt Street, Tottenham Court Road, and here the dismal tragedy ended.

It was long before Grimaldi in any degree recovered this great shock; his wife never did. She lingered on in a state of great suffering for two years afterwards, until death happily relieved her.

He was now left alone in the world; he had always been a domesticated man, delighting in nothing more than in the society of

his relations and friends; and the condition of solitary desolation in which he was now left, nearly drove him into a state of melancholy madness. His crippled limbs and broken bodily health rendered it necessary to his existence that he should have an attentive nurse, and occasionally at least cheerful society; finding his situation wholly insupportable, he resolved to return to town, and wrote to a friend, whose wife was his only remaining relative, to procure a small house for him in his own neighbourhood, where he too had lived so long and happily. A neat little dwelling, next door to this friend's house, in Southampton Street, Pentonville, being at that time to let, was taken and furnished for him, and thither he removed without more delay. Many of his old friends came from time to time to cheer him with a few minutes' conversation, and he experienced the warmest and kindest treatment from his neighbours, and from Mr. Richard Hughes, who bore in mind his promise to his dying sister, to the last moment of Grimaldi's life.

He concludes his memoirs by taking a more

cheerful view of his condition than could well have been expected of a man suffering so much, and ends in these words:—

"My histrionic acquaintance frequently favour me with their company, when we together review past scenes, and contrast them with those of the present time. My esteemed friend, Alfred Bunn, has been with me this very day, and I expect to see my amiable patroness, if she will permit me to call her so, Miss Kelly, tomorrow.

"In my solitary hours—and in spite of all the kindness of my friends I have many of them—my thoughts often dwell upon the past: and there is one circumstance which always affords me unmitigated satisfaction; it is simply that I cannot recollect one single instance in which I have intentionally wronged man, woman, or child, and this gives me great satisfaction and comfort.

"This is the 18th of December, 1836. I was born on the 18th of December, 1779, and consequently have completed my 57th year.

"Life is a game we are bound to play—
The wise enjoy it, fools grow sick of it;
Losers, we find, have the stakes to pay,
That winners may laugh, for that's the trick of it.

"J. GRIMALDI."

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

Grimaldi died on the 31st of May, 1837, having survived the completion of the last chapter of his biography just five months, during which his health had considerably improved, although his bodily energies and physical powers had remained in the same state of hopeless prostration. Having gradually recovered the effects of the severe mental shocks which had crowded upon him in his decline, he had regained his habitual serenity and cheerfulness, and appeared likely to live, and even to enjoy life—incompatible with all enjoyment as his condition would seem to have been—for many years. He had no other wish than to be happy in the society of his old friends; and uttered no other complaint than that, in their absence, he sometimes found his solitude heavy and irksome. He looked forward to the publication of his

manuscript with an anxiety which it is impossible to describe, and imagined that the day on which he exhibited it in a complete form to his friends, would be the proudest of his life.

He was destined never to experience this harmless gratification; the sudden dissolution which deprived him of it, mercifully released him from all the pains and sufferings which could not fail to have been, sooner or later, the attendants upon that state of death in life to which he had been untimely reduced.

It had been Grimaldi's habit for some time previous to his death, to spend a portion of each evening at a tavern hard by, where the society of a few respectable persons, resident in the neighbourhood, in some measure compensated him for the many long hours he spent by his lonely fireside. Utterly bereft of the use of his limbs, he used to be carried backwards and forwards (he had only a few doors to go) on the shoulders of a man.

On the night of his death, he was carried home in the usual manner, and cheerfully bidding his companion good night, observed that he should be ready for him on the morrow at

the customary time. He had not long been in bed when his housekeeper, fancying she heard a noise in his room, hurried down, but all was quiet: she went in again, later in the night, and found him dead. The body was cold, for he had been dead some hours.

A coroner's inquest was held on the following day. The testimony of the medical gentlemen who had been promptly called in, fully established the fact that his death had arisen from causes purely natural; and the jury at once returned a verdict that he had died by the visitation of God.

He was buried on the ensuing Monday, June the sixth, in the burying ground of St. James's Chapel, on Pentonville Hill. In the next grave lie the bones of his friend, Mr. Charles Dibdin, so frequently mentioned in these volumes; the author of many of the pieces in which he shone in his best days, and of many of the songs with which he was wont to set his audience in a roar.

Any attempted summary of Grimaldi's peculiarities in this place would be an impertinence. There are many who remember him, and they

need not be told how rich his humour was; to those who do not recollect him in his great days, it would be impossible to convey any adequate idea of his extraordinary performances. There are no standards to compare him with, or models to judge him by; all his excellences were his own, and there are none resembling them among the pantomime actors of the present day.

This is not said with any view of depreciating the abilities of the many clever actors we have in this peculiar department. Among a variety of others, Smith and Payne of Covent-garden, (not of Lombard-street,) and Wieland of Drury-lane, may be mentioned as possessing grotesque humour of no ordinary kind; while for mere feats of tumbling dexterity, Brown, King, and Gibson of the Adelphi, perhaps, stand unrivalled. It is no disparagement to all or any of these actors of pantomime, to say, that the genuine droll, the grimacing, filching, irresistible clown, left the stage with Grimaldi, and, though often heard of, has never since been seen.

In private, Grimaldi was a general favourite, not only among his equals, but with his superiors and inferiors. That he was a man of the

kindest heart, and the most child-like simplicity, nobody who has read the foregoing pages can for a moment doubt. He was innocent of all caution in worldly matters, and has been known, on the seller's warranty, to give forty guineas for a gold watch, which, as it subsequently turned out, would have been dear at ten. Among many acts of private goodness may be mentioned—although he shrunk from the slightest allusion to the story — his release of a brother actor from Lancaster jail, under circumstances which showed a pure benevolence of heart and delicacy of feeling, that would have done honour to a prince.

With far more temptations to indulge in the pleasures of the table than most men encounter, Grimaldi was through life remarkably temperate, never having been seen, indeed, in a state of intoxication. But he was a great eater, as most pantomime actors are, who enjoy good health, and abstain from dram-drinking; and it was supposed, at the time of his decease, that an attack of indigestion consequent upon too hearty a supper at too late an hour, materially hastened, if it did not actually occasion, his death.

Many readers will ridicule the idea of a clown being a man of great feeling and sensibility: Grimaldi was so, notwithstanding, and suffered most severely from the afflictions which befel him. The loss of his wife, to whom he had been long and devotedly attached, preyed upon his mind to a greater or less extent, for many years. The reckless career and dreadful death of his only son, bowed him down with grief. The young man's notorious conduct had embittered the best portion of his existence: and his sudden death, when a better course seemed opening before him, had well nigh terminated his unhappy father's days.

But although in the weakened state in which he then was, the sad event preying alike upon his mind and body, changed Grimaldi's appearance, in a few weeks, to that of a shrunken imbecile old man; and although, when he had in some measure recovered from this heavy blow, he had to mourn the loss of his wife, with whom he had lived happily for more than thirty years, he survived the trials to which he had been exposed, and lived to recover his cheerfulness and peace.

Deprived of all power of motion; doomed to bear, at a time of life when he might reasonably have looked forward to many years of activity and exertion, the worst bodily evils of the most helpless old age; condemned to drag out the remainder of his days in a solitary chamber, when all those who make up the sum of home were cold in death, his existence would seem to have been a weary one indeed; but he was patient and resigned under all these trials, and in time grew contented, and even happy.

This strong endurance of griefs so keen, and reverses so poignant, may perhaps teach more strongly than a hundred homilies, that there are no afflictions which time will not soften, and fortitude overcome. Let those who smile at the deduction of so trite a moral from the biography of a clown, reflect, that the fewer the resources of a man's own mind, the greater his merit in rising superior to misfortune. Let them remember too, that in this case the light and life of a brilliant theatre were exchanged in an instant for the gloom and sadness of a dull sick room.

THE END.

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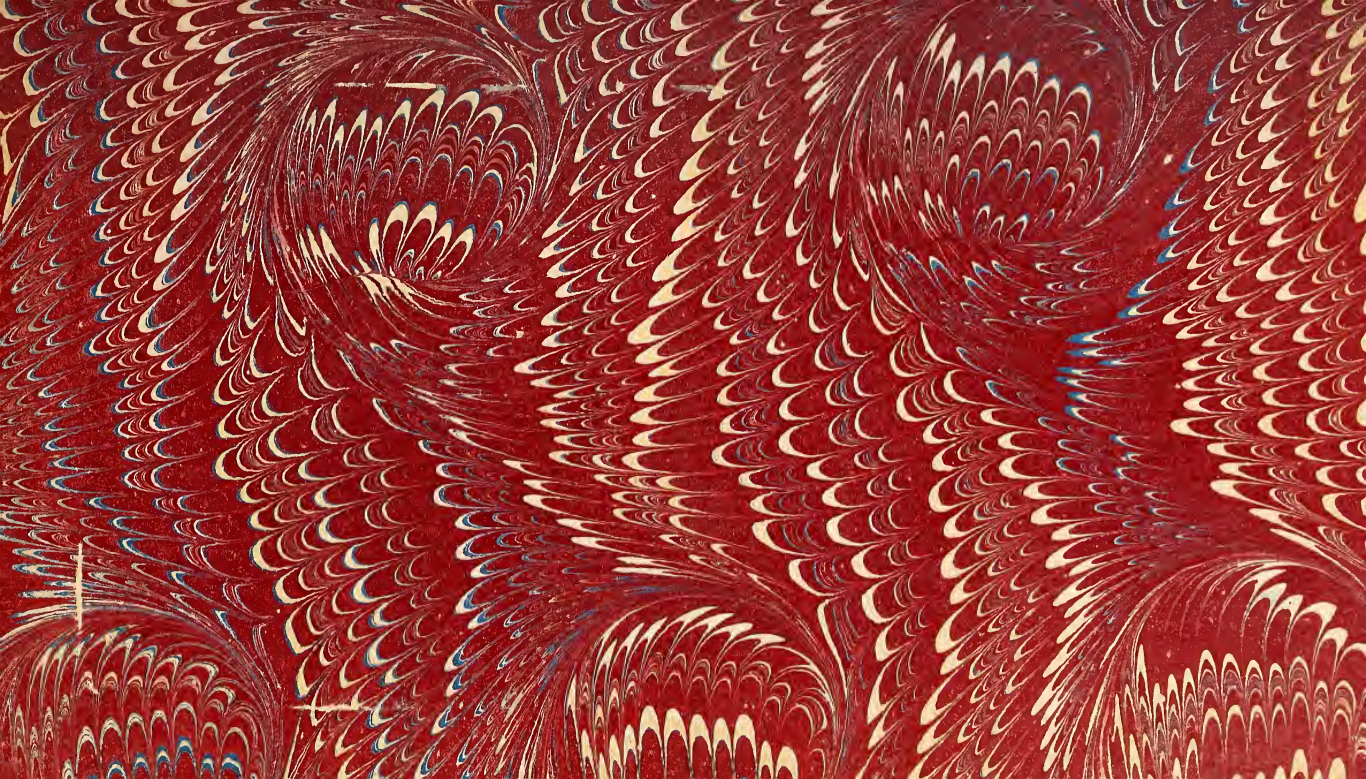

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